

Nova Scotia **Conference** on the **Family**

June 21 - 23, 1987

Saint Francis Xavier University
Antigonish, Nova Scotia

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Nova Scotia



**Department of
Social Services**

**NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE
ON
THE FAMILY**

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

by

**MR. WILLIAM GREATOREX
CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN**

NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

by

MR. WILLIAM GREATOREX

Sunday, June 21, 1987

In the fall of 1985, the Honourable John Buchanan, Premier of Nova Scotia responded to the crisis of an overtaxed Child Welfare System by promising to convene a Task Force on Family and Children's Services. The Task Force was established by the Honourable Edmund Morris, Minister of Social Services shortly thereafter in 1985. At that time, Mr. Morris pledged his intention to convene a first-ever Conference on the Family in Nova Scotia for June of 1987.

The Task Force Report was presented to the Minister on March 4, 1987 and June 21 to 23 were the dates chosen for the Conference. Immediately, within the Department, the Minister established a Conference Planning Committee which, over the months leading up to the Conference, worked diligently to ensure its success.

The purpose of the Conference was to provide an opportunity for those who submitted briefs to the Task Force to consider and comment upon the 65 recommendations contained in the Task Force Report on Family and Children's Services. It was also to provide the Minister of Social Services with the delegates' views in respect to the Task Force Report.

Approximately 307 persons registered at the Conference, including the nine members of the Task force and approximately 50 members of the Task Force Panels. Delegates included a wide spectrum of professionals and volunteers involved in the provision of services to families and children in Nova Scotia, together with representatives from Municipal Government and Provincial Government departments.

The Conference format allowed for two plenary sessions and a series of 15 workshops. Reverend Father Gregory MacKinnon, President of St. Francis Xavier University, acted as Chief Rapporteur for the Conference.

The Conference commenced with a plenary session at which the Honourable Edmund Morris set the tone for the next few days in his address to the group and officially opened the Conference. Words of welcome were extended by several platform guests, namely, His Worship, Mayor Colin Chisholm, Father Gregory MacKinnon and the Most Reverend Colin Campbell, Bishop of the Diocese of Antigonish. Other platform guests included Dr. D. W. MacNeil, Warden H. Fraser, Reverend Vincent Ihasz, Mr. Carmen Moir and members of the Task Force.

At the Tuesday afternoon plenary session, Father MacKinnon, the Chief Rapporteur, reported on the outcome of the various workshops. Following his remarks, the delegates had an opportunity to direct questions to Father MacKinnon and the Task Force and workshop Co-Chairpersons, Bessie Harris and Dr. David Stevenson.

The Conference concluded with a reception and banquet on Tuesday evening at which Premier John Buchanan addressed the delegates. In his remarks, the Premier affirmed the commitment and support of his Government for services to families and children.

St. Francis Xavier University provided an ideal setting for what proved to be by all accounts a most successful first-ever Conference on the Family in Nova Scotia. The following pages of this document contain an overview of the proceedings of this precedent setting Conference.

W. D. Groatorex
Conference Chairman.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**The Honourable Edmund L. Morris, M.L.A.
Minister of Social Services**

NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

by the

HONOURABLE EDMUND MORRIS, M.L.A.

MINISTER OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Sunday, June 21, 1987

Mr. Chairman; Bishop Campbell; Father President; Reverend Ihasz; My colleague in the Legislative Assembly; Dr. Chuck MacNeil; Mayor Chisholm; Warden Fraser; Co-chairpersons of the Task Force, Bessie Harris and David Stevenson; Deputy Minister; Task Force and Panel Members; Your Honours and Your Worships in the audience; My Fellow Conferees,

One Saturday afternoon in October 1985, Premier Buchanan and I flew to Sydney.

We talked about the rapidity of societal change, about challenges to the family - we are parents ourselves of 11 children - new lifestyles, family violence, child and adult abuse, the stress on established agencies and services; about the need to reassert the priority of the family in the social fabric of Nova Scotia, and about how government should support the family, not become a substitute for it, develop pro-active, preventive programs as effective as reactive.

I wanted to establish a Task Force on Family and Children's Services. We went over some preliminary terms of reference, conceptual at that time and not yet in detail. There should be a following Conference on the Family, to which we would bring the most experienced professionals in family and child services, board and staff members of agencies, academics, consultants, churchmen, adoptive, foster, natural and single parents, representatives of municipal, provincial and federal governments, officers of the Courts, child care workers, Judges - in brief, the best and the brightest - preferably in

the environment of a University, a surround of thoughtfulness, intellectual stimulation and grace - where better than Saint Francis Xavier - to set the stage for family and children's services for the last decade of the twentieth and the dawn of the 21st century.

Beneath us sped some of the beautiful places of our Province - Lake Charlotte, Liscombe, Aspen, Country Harbour, Lachaber, Boylston, Saint Peters, Bras d'Or and Ben Eoin - hearths and homes of decent, honourable people, learners at the sea's edge that prosperity and adversity can be equal imposters, that the time to batten down the hatches is when the sea makes up and to bend on sail when the winds are fair, the families of Nova Scotia, the salt of the earth.

That night, at the Annual Meeting of Family Services Canada. Premier Buchanan announced the Task Force and the Conference on the Family.

And here tonight, as with all singular matters, what seemed so distant at the beginning is, joyously, upon us.

The first-ever Nova Scotia Conference on the Family!

APPRECIATION

Let me briefly begin by saying the nearly unsayable - how earnest is our gratitude to the Co-chairpersons of the Task Force, Bessie Harris and David Stevenson, their seven fellow members - Darrel Pink, Sandra MacNeil, Norman Stubbington, Rosemary Rippon, Martha Crowe, Mike Craig and Bill Greateorex; the 54 members of the six panels into which the 15 months work of the Task Force was sub-divided, all of them volunteers; private sector employers and agencies who allowed staff the time to participate; literally hundreds of individuals, municipalities, agencies, groups and organizations who wrote or presented briefs; those in the other Provinces who assisted with information and reflective comment; to Miss Gwen Pickering, who was the distinguished Acting Deputy Minister of Social Services when the

idea first began; and staff members of the Department of Social Services, under the direction of Deputy Minister Carmen Moir, who have worked together with the staff of this great University to provide the splendid arrangements, already so evident, for our Conference.

THE WAY AHEAD

As we begin our historic Conference, at what point have we arrived, and what part can each of us take over the next two days?

In the little more than three months since the Report was presented, we have commenced in the Department of Social Services detailed consideration of 37 of the Task Force's 65 recommendations for change.

We will do the same, over the next few weeks, with each of the remaining 28 recommendations, and with the proceedings of our Conference.

Each of us has an opportunity at our Conference to participate in and contribute to planning and to bringing about change. Each of us recognizes that there are deficits, gaps, lacks in the service system. It is the mark of a healthy society that its reach exceeds its grasp. The business of our Conference is not to lament or complain, not to dismantle the present but to build the future. We fail if we do no more than catalogue a shopping list for new and more spending by governments. Additional funding will be required and will be found, but so will surer priorities and greater coordination. Since we cannot do everything - some believe we should not - we should do well and helpfully and supportively the something we can do. We are here to strengthen the family, not to strengthen government as its substitute.

THE FIRST RECOMMENDATION

I speak tonight of one Task Force recommendation only, the first of the 65, primus inter pares, Recommendation I:

"that the Minister urge the government to develop and implement a policy on the family which clearly expresses its commitment to the concept of the family as an essential part of the social fabric of Nova Scotia, and, therefore, worthy of government action and support."

Let me recall what it is the Task Force said about this very first of its recommendations:

"The traditionalist who look back longing to "...a time when strong, independent families took care of their own and raised children to socially responsible adulthood" (Hobbs and Associates, 1984:307) predict its death. The futurists, on the other hand, acknowledge that the traditional family, though not as plentiful or as dominant as it used to be, is joining together with other emerging family forms to create a new family system (Toffler, 1980:223). Regardless of the perspective from which it is viewed, the family endures as the most necessary and essential element of our society. Its future well-being, however, depends in large measure upon the importance that society and government attach to its preservation and the creative actions they undertake to support it.

"During the course of its work, the Task Force listened as individuals, groups and organizations asked repeatedly that government prove its commitment to the preservation of the family and family life by consciously taking into account the effect its actions have on the family. The following quotation summarizes their position:

"...that government must not be content to be a passive interpreter of family events; intervening mainly to alleviate hurts and correct damages. It must be an active supporter of family life, making resources available and accessible to families so that they can carry out their functions completely."

"The development of a statement of family policy was perceived as a way for government to demonstrate its support of the family, protect it through the economic and social transformations taking place in society, and provide a coordinated process for the monitoring of policies affecting the family. Many of our current policies and programs do not recognize the new diversity of family forms and, therefore, do not support or enhance them.

"In its examination of family policy, the Task Force reviewed existing policies, or lack of them, in other Provinces and countries. Most countries do not have an explicit, written family policy which has as its conscious purpose, the promotion, development, support or well-being of the family. Rather, actions are undertaken and policies developed which, although not solely directed toward the family, have an impact on it. Since the orientation for policy development is most often toward individual or interest group needs - e.g., senior citizens - it may not have positive consequences on the family.

"Governments have been reluctant to develop, promote and support a family policy, partially because of the value placed historically on individualism, the independence of the individual and individual initiative. (Rice, 1977:79) The assumption is that too much emphasis on the family might interfere with individual rights. (Genovese, 1984:7)

"Canada does not differ from most other countries in the way it develops policies and programs. It has no single identifiable family policy which, in an holistic approach, specifically supports the family. The same is true of the Provinces. None has an explicit statement of family policy and, although Quebec is involved in a public consultation on the need to develop a family policy for the Province, such a policy has not yet emerged.

"Based on the literature, the essential elements of the family policy recognize that:

1. the family in all its forms is the most essential and basic unit of our society even though there is a far greater diversity of family patterns in today's society;
2. the family is a vibrant living unit which interacts with the larger social system;
3. what happens in the family is often more the result of what goes on in society, rather than the reverse; and,
4. public policy, instead of strengthening family well-being, often contributes to its problems.

"As stated earlier, most of the presentations to the Task Force perceived the development of a family policy for Nova Scotia as an expression of the government's commitment to the well-being of the family and its support of the family through the economic and the social transformations which are taking place. The presentations also perceived a family policy as providing a focal point for the development of government policy which could affect the family by protecting and enhancing it. These perceptions were not unlike those expressed in discussion documents on family policy prepared in Quebec, which state that the goals and objectives of family policy are to dignify and support the family and to co-ordinate government policy with regard to the family.

"If, as is so frequently stated, the family is the most basic and necessary unit of society, ways must be found to translate such beliefs into support for the family. One of the ways this can be achieved is by the establishment of a family perspective in public policy.

"The Task Force debated at length the pros and cons of a government policy on the family. An holistic approach to the scrutiny and monitoring of legislative acts, regulations and policies within provincial jurisdiction which affect the family seemed desirable and possible within the parameters of a policy on the family. In order to establish and maintain a family policy that enhances family life, the provincial government must be willing to adjust or eliminate any such acts, regulations or policies which are harmful to the family and the services supporting it.

"Given its recognition of the family as the most basic and desirable unit of society and its wish to do all that is possible to ensure a good quality of life for families and children in Nova Scotia, the Task Force recommends:

- 1.1 that the Minister urge the government to develop and implement a policy on the family which clearly expresses its commitment to the concept of the family as an essential part

of the social fabric of Nova Scotia, and, therefore, worthy of government actions and support."

I want to say, as we begin our great Conference, that whatever the difficulties, as Minister of Social Services I accept this first recommendation. It is fundamental, in my view, to all the rest. It will be both cause and effect. It will reflect programs that support the family and it will inspire and lead to policies that support the family.

I hope therefore that the Workshop on Family Policy, particularly, will commence its deliberations from the starting point of this fundamental Recommendation, and go forward here at the Conference, reflecting upon and recommending what such a "Policy on the Family" should contain, how it could be implemented and made operational, and what will be the consequences of its adoption on other policies and programs.

THE WORKSHOPS

Included in our Conference documents is a helpful guide for our participation in the several workshops:

1. Main recommendation of Workshop.
2. How should government implement this recommendation, taking into consideration the current system's ability to deal with it?
3. Are the recommendations of the Task Force in this chapter of the Report appropriate?
4. Are there recommendations not made which should be made?
5. If recommendations of the Task Force made in the relevant chapter of the Task Force Report are also contained in the top ten recommendations, is the prioritization appropriate?
6. If recommendations in the relevant chapter of the Task Force Report are not in the top ten recommendations, should some of or all of them be in the top ten?

"FIRST, DO NO HARM"

Late last week we reviewed again the preparations for our Conference - the list of chairpersons, rapporteurs and resource persons who have volunteered and to whom we are most grateful, especially to Father MacKinnon, President of the University, who has undertaken the significant role of Chief Rapporteur; and the gracious amenities being provided to us by the University and its staff.

Bessie Harris had come upon a quotation from Samuel Smiles: perhaps it could be one of the tocsins for our conference.

I know too little of Samuel Smiles - Edinburgh-born, or nearly so, one-time editor of a radical newspaper in Leeds; author of an 1859 best-seller on "Self-Help" that extolled the value of thrift. By the last of his 92 years, in 1904, he may well have felt that he had lived into an hostile age.

"We learn wisdom from failure much more than successes," Smiles wrote. "We often discover what will do by finding out what will not do."

We ought at our Conference to do both - find out what will not do, discover what will do. As we strive together here to discern better and new ways to support the family, we might also find wisdom in the words of the Hippocratic Oath, "First, do no harm."

PREMIER'S VISIT TO CONFERENCE

We hope that our Conference, in reviewing and reflecting upon the Task Force Report and its recommendations, will react consensually - agreeable focus for what needs next to be done, not only to do no harm but to broaden, deepen and strengthen public and private support of the family, in the words of Recommendation, as "an essential part" - dare one say the essential part? - "of the social fabric of Nova Scotia."

Premier Buchanan will be here with us at our Conference's closing Tuesday evening, as he was at the beginning in announcing it 20 months ago. We hope that he will be able to respond affirmatively to many of the major thrusts of the Conference, so to reaffirm the government's commitment to the most treasured, valued and vital of all Nova Scotia's resources - the parents and children, the families, of our beloved Province.

So, then, let us be about this Conference's historic business.

OFFICIAL OPENING

Mr. Chairman, it is my proud honour, as Minister of Social Services, to declare officially open this first-ever Nova Scotia Conference on the Family.



HONOURABLE EDMUND L. MORRIS - KEYNOTE SPEAKER
FOR THE OPENING PLENARY SESSION

OPENING PLENARY SESSION



BILL GREATOREX
CONFERENCE
CHAIRMAN

INTRODUCTION TO WORKSHOP SESSIONS

PLATFORM
GUESTS



CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY INTRODUCTION TO WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Workshops on eleven subjects which corresponded to chapters or parts of chapters in the Task Force Report were held throughout a one and one-half day period. Each subject was addressed in three workshop sessions, with the exception of Services to Families, Child Abuse, Services to Adolescents and Family Violence. These latter four areas were addressed in six workshop sessions in response to the demand for them.

Only two workshop sessions were held on adoption. All participants were assigned to the first three workshops of their choice.

Both workshop Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were drawn from the members of the Task Force and Panels and other persons who agreed to act as Chairpersons/Rapporteurs. Father Gregory MacKinnon, the Chief Rapporteur, along with members of the Conference Planning Committee and Dr. Stevenson and Miss Harris met with the Chairpersons/Rapporteurs prior to the Conference and several times throughout to discuss the workshop sessions. (A list of Chairpersons/Rapporteurs and their alternates can be found in Appendix "B").

Each workshop was asked to respond to six questions (Appendix "C") relating each to their subject area, e.g., Services to Adolescents.

In preparing the Summary which follows the responses to the questions/statements have been addressed in relation to each of the recommendations of the Task Force Report which were discussed during the workshops. Differences in opinion, overall prioritization of recommendations and suggestions for changes not mentioned in the Task Force Report, have been noted. Generally, however, the Conference was supportive of the Task Force Report and recommendations.

WORKSHOP SUMMARIES

**WORKSHOP ON FAMILY POLICY AND
CO-ORDINATION OF SERVICES**

CHAIRPERSON: Rev. Vincent Ihasz **RAPPORTEUR:** Joan Glode

The three sessions of this workshop examined the first two priority recommendations of the Report of the Task Force on Family and Children's Services. Those involved gave unanimous support to recommendations and the priority the Task Force gave them. This was generally true of other Conference participants, as well.

In relation to Family Policy, the participants felt rather than being a recommendation, it should be a principle or as they expressed it, "a philosophical underpinning supporting the rest of the recommendations" and should be regarded as a basis against which all government policy affecting the family is measured.

While supporting the development of a policy on the family, participants specifically wanted it to be:

- a) based on the least intrusive principle - ie., provide support to families, not assume their responsibilities;
- b) not just philosophical, but pragmatic; and,
- c) brought into affect with appropriate resources to monitor its implementation and operation.

The need for co-ordination at all levels throughout the Family and Children's Services system was discussed by several workshops. There was total agreement that co-ordination was required and that government should establish an appropriate mechanism to ensure co-ordination occurs. The Health, Education and Social Services Committee was thoroughly discussed and although negative feelings about the current committee were expressed and there was some

reluctance to perpetuate what was perceived as an ineffective co-ordinating mechanism, participants did not suggest an alternative. What they did recommend was that:

a) a fresh, innovative approach be undertaken with the H.E.S.S. Committee

- . the Department of the Attorney-General be included in the Committee;
- . the Committee be given a new role and mandate - eg., the implementation of the policy on the family;
- . the Committee be enhanced with support staff with status and background experience in family and children's services;
- . the H.E.S.S. Committee have a budget.

and,

b) local level (regional) H.E.S.S. Committees be developed.

WORKSHOPS ON SERVICES TO FAMILIES

CHAIRPERSONS: Betty Gruchy
Debbi Forsyth-Smith

RAPPORTEURS: Barbara Hall
Rev. Bernard O'Neill

The six sessions of the workshops on Services to Families took as their primary concern, recognition of the basic importance of the family unit. They felt that if the importance of the family unit was affirmed then the financial, social, health and other supports necessary to help families function effectively would be put in place. This led to the conclusion that no one recommendation in the section of the Task Force on Services to Families took precedence over all the others.

The participants agreed with the appropriateness of the recommendations in the Service to Families section of the Task Force Report but felt the word 'obliged' rather than encouraged should be used in recommendation #3.

The group also gave strong affirmation and support to a preventative approach being taken and felt that this could only be successful if Government took a long range preventive/supportive approach in services to families. One workshop questioned if the present social system itself was appropriate for this day and age and if we should be more mindful of the working poor and the need for a host of preventative services. Participants felt that Government should be encouraged to enhance the education system so that students in grades 8 and 9 levels would have the option of vocational or trades training to prevent them from becoming part of the welfare system.

Specific areas addressed by the workshops related to the assignment of maintenance, counseling services, family life education, day care, teaching homemakers and the social assistance system.

The assignment of maintenance was felt to be so essential and a basic part of the system that it was beyond the priority list and should not have had to be pulled out to be focused on in the future.

Workshop participants felt that counseling services including family life education should be recognized in law as an essential social service funded by Government and put in alignment with the Charter of Rights for equality of access to Social Services. The implementation of this recommendation could be brought about by recognizing the need for the ongoing coordination of Social Service agencies with the volunteer and local community sectors and by Government facilitating self-help groups by funding them. The Workshops felt that mediation and counseling services should be provided around the area of family breakdown which is an increasing phenomenon and that family mediation services be made available within family service agencies and within the family court.

It was felt the recommendation on Day Care should be enlarged to include more Day Care facilities for teenage mothers in high schools and more subsidization for all families requiring Day Care and not just those at risk.

The group also recommended that the Social Assistance Act parts one and two be rewritten keeping in mind recommendations #4, #7 and #8 of the Task Force, with particular emphasis on special needs. In line with their discussion on prevention they felt that adequate Family Benefits and Municipal Social Assistance were important elements in fighting family breakdown. They reiterated the goal of full employment with job training and recognition of parents' work at home as job-worthy of remuneration. It was also suggested that the Provincial Government make broader use of the Canada Assistance Plan.

The Workshop advocated a broader use of teaching Homemakers as an integral and essential element in both active and preventive Family and Children's services programming.

**WORKSHOP ON SERVICES TO
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN**

CHAIRPERSON: Mary Lou Clarke **RAPPORTEUR:** Joyce Ross

The response of the Workshop sessions to the recommendations of the Task Force emphasized the need for more funding for in-home supports for handicapped children. This was viewed as a priority.

The Workshop participants suggested that the Task Force should have been more inclusive in their comments on Services to Handicapped Children and more broadly examined the services needed, as well as, the expansion of some of the services currently being offered. The Workshop stated that they were disappointed that services to handicapped children did not get more attention in the Task Force Report.

With regard to the move within the Department of Social Services of Services to Mentally Handicapped Children from the Rehabilitation and Community Services Division to the Family and Children's Services Division, the Workshop supported the Task Force recommendation in principle, but cautioned that if the move took place the needs of special and handicapped children should not be lost within the needs already prioritized for other children.

WORKSHOPS ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

CHAIRPERSONS: Mary Cooley
Norma Profitt

RAPPORTEURS: Richard Seigny
Debra Burris

The general consensus of the Workshop was that full support should be given to the inclusion of at least one full-time children's services worker in the budget of each transition house. The term 'children's services worker' was favoured over that of child care worker which was felt to be a rather restrictive title. The Workshop went on to recommend that a coordinated response to family violence be developed which would include interdisciplinary training for professionals through HESS (including the Department of the Attorney General).

Both Workshops on Family Violence recommended that the response and recommendation of the Task Force related to family violence be contained within the top ten recommendations. As well, it was felt that the recommendations regarding the response to family violence should have been broadened to include family life education, pre-marriage courses and public awareness campaigns. There was also a strong feeling within the workshops that Courts be given the authority to remove perpetrators of family violence from the home.

In summary, discussions suggested that a wholistic approach to services to the family be espoused and that the family should be treated as a unit not as a fragmented entity.

WORKSHOP ON CHILD NEGLECT AND ABUSE

CHAIRPERSONS: Dr. John Anderson **RAPPORTEURS:** Sharon Irwin
Barb MacPherson John Campbell

The Workshops on these topics showed general support for the allocation of funds for special needs in situations where children are not in care for preventative intervention purposes. With regard to treatment for victims of child neglect, as well as perpetrators of abuse, it was suggested by the workshops that there be a coordinated interdisciplinary approach to treatment and that other departments including Health, Education and the Department of the Attorney General be involved in treatment plans. The Workshops expanded the idea of treatment to include regional assessment teams and recommended that they be involved as the first phase of a treatment continuum.

In the discussion on child neglect and abuse, the Workshops quickly focused on the recommendation of the Task Force to reduce caseloads over the next three years. Strong support for the recommendation was apparent in their clear push for beginning the reduction in the fiscal year 1988-89 and their desire to have clear benchmarks set for the three-year phase-in.

WORKSHOP ON FOSTER CARE

CHAIRPERSON: Pauline Johnson RAPPORTEUR: Norman Stubbington

While the Workshop was generally supportive of the recommendations in the Task Force Report dealing with foster care, there were two themes which emerged from the workshops which received greater attention than they were given in the Report of the Task Force. The first was in respect to permanency planning. The workshops gave considerable attention to the philosophy of child care and recommended that permanency planning be included in any amendments to legislation.

The second matter which received attention in the workshops related to the training of foster parents. The workshops recognized the vital importance of a continuum of training from orientation to the development of skills for fostering children with special needs. They emphasized, however, that if foster parents did receive special training, there must be a recognition of their efforts through the provision of adequate compensation.

In addition to these two major recommendations, the Workshop also dealt with the importance of a complete assessment of behavioural and emotional problems of the children being placed in foster care. This should apply particularly in relation to the number of children being placed who have been victims of sexual assaults.

The Workshop on Foster Care also addressed the question respecting the number of times and circumstances under which children repetitively come into voluntary care and felt that in some ways the shorter periods of stay in care hampered the ability of foster parents to help children.

Finally, it was suggested that foster parents should be granted legal recognition as interested parties when children in care come before the Court and should not be involved simply as witnesses.

WORKSHOP ON ADOPTION

CHAIRPERSON: Marilyn Peers

RAPPORTEUR: Lesley Reid

Four themes emerged from the two Workshops dealing with the matter of adoption. The first and most critical dealt with the Task Force recommendation that a centralized adoption agency or service, operated by the Department of Social Services with regional units, be established and also that there be a Province-wide register of adoptive parents and children available for adoption. There were considerably different points of view expressed on these issues. The larger, private adoption agencies were not able to support this recommendation while smaller agencies in the more rural parts of the Province felt that there was considerable merit in this approach. It is not possible to say that a consensus was reached by the participants in the Workshops.

There was strong support from the Workshops for the appointment of one person within the Department to carry all of the responsibilities related to the adoption program.

The workshops dealt, as well, with the matter of third-party adoptions and were in favour of legislation which would prohibit this practice where relatives were not involved.

Finally, in discussions on the concept of open adoption, the view of the workshops supported that there be more activity and practice in this area.

WORKSHOP ON ADOLESCENTS

CHAIRPERSONS: Helen Blau
Alex Bruce

RAPPORTEURS: Maizie Archibald
Bill McCarron

There were two sets of three workshops each dealing with Services to Adolescents in response to the number of people who expressed an interest in this Workshop. There was considerable discussion in the sessions in respect to the Task Force Report and its recommendations relating to Services to Adolescents. Of particular note was the support for the position of a Coordinator of Adolescent and Residential Services within the Family and Children's Services Division. This position was viewed as having direct responsibility for the program of adolescent services and for the development of either crisis/assessment centres or, in one reference, a support assessment centre for adolescents who were in difficulty.

Crisis/assessment facilities were viewed as a priority and should be strategically located throughout the Province so agencies/children would have the service accessible within a reasonable distance.

The workshops dealt with the question of philosophy providing services to adolescents. It came through clearly that the services provided to adolescents should be in the context of service to the family unit and not focus on the adolescent solely. They identified a very clear need to provide support services to families with adolescents who are experiencing adjustment difficulties that are not uncommon with this age range but more complex during this current era.

The workshops offered considerable support to the recommendation that services be made available when appropriate to young persons between the ages of 16 and 18 years. They spent time in discussing the means of dealing with children whose behaviour is unmanageable and a consensus was reached that there be a recourse to the Courts to deal with unmanageability when the services that are offered voluntarily are not accepted and/or effective.

The Workshop, in dealing with the matter of service coordination, particularly from an inter-Departmental perspective, suggested that the efforts of coordination be extended considerably beyond Health and Social Services with representation from both the Departments of Education and the Attorney General.

WORKSHOP ON RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

CHAIRPERSON: Frank Capstick **RAPPORTEUR:** Ross Thorpe

There were three workshop sessions held on Residential Facilities and, with some very small differences, all three had essentially the same concerns and reached the same consensus.

All participants supported the Task Force priority recommendation for the appointment of a Co-ordinator of Adolescent Services and Residential Facilities. It was felt that unless this was done other recommendations could not be implemented. In addition, in order to achieve the tasks required, participants stated the Co-ordinator would need a clear mandate and consultation with current service providers prior to undertaking any restructuring of the residential facilities system.

It was suggested that recommendations 10.1 and 10.2 respectively become part of priority recommendations four and five in the Task Force Report.

Recommendation 10.1 relating to the restructuring of the Residential Facilities System was seen as necessary in order to logically determine the nature and number of additional services required.

Recommendation 10.2 relating to enhancements to the Nova Scotia Residential Centre would only be effective if concurrent efforts were made to develop the crisis/assessment centres and long term care facilities to prevent bottlenecks from occurring in the system. Some concern was expressed about Truro as a location for a long term treatment facility. It was also noted that the system will only work if Health facilities allow for smooth access to their services.

The workshops also recognized the need to develop family supports and assistance to facilitate the re-integration of the children who need residential care on a temporary basis into their families. Families were

viewed as one of the three major players in the system; the other two being the residential service and the child.

With regard to placement, while the participants agreed proximity of such services to the family is important, they felt the appropriateness of a particular placement for the child should take precedence.

Concern was also expressed that service needs of mentally handicapped children not be forgotten.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CHAIRPERSON: Elsie Blake

RAPPORTEUR: Joan MacKinnon

Participants in the three workshop sessions agreed unanimously with priority recommendation number three of the Task Force relating to the reduction of caseloads. Although there was general agreement the implementation of this recommendation is urgent, the participants felt definite objectives should be set for each year of the three year implementation schedule and the areas (agencies) with the greatest need should be dealt with first.

Other recommendations of the Task Force were generally supported with several comments/suggestions made for clarification and/or changes in wording. Some of the suggestions are noted:

- a) the position of Co-ordinator of Adolescent Services and Residential Facilities should be separated into two positions;
- b) the Settlement issue (Rec. 11.15) needs clarification;
- c) the funding issue for agencies must be clarified further and inequities addressed;
- d) the concentration of staff training should be the development of a structured program for managerial training. Managers should be given more incentive to become good trainers and thought should be given to decentralizing training funds.
- e) in terms of qualifications for jobs, some participants felt that access to jobs should not be limited solely to those persons with social work degrees.

WORKSHOP ON LEGISLATION

CHAIRPERSON: Judge James Williams **RAPPORTEUR:** Trevor Townsend

Two major recommendations were made by the workshop participants. The first was that a total review of the Children's Services Act be undertaken and, the second, that the concept and possibility of a Unified Family Court be explored. These two recommendations were not in the Task Force Report.

It was felt by participants in two of the three workshop sessions, that legislative change should be of high priority and should be given immediate attention.

All three workshops explored a wide range of areas of concern, some of which were as outlined:

- a) There was support for the recommendations made in the Task Force Report relating to the Child Abuse Register and Child Abuse. However, all participants felt there should be allowance for broader use of the Register and an examination of the process for placement on it.

The Workshops also supported provision being made for the Court to order the removal of the perpetrator from the home.

- b) Task Force recommendations relating to the Guardian Ad Litem and Children's Evidence were supported as was that of the Notice to Bring, - section 44 of the Children Services Act. With regard to the latter recommendation, participants stated there needs to be clarification of the purpose and intent of section 44.
- c) Suggestions were made to remove the word "legitimate" from the C.S.A. and amend the definition of parent under Section 2w to include fathers of children with unmarried parents.

- d) Recommendation 8.1 referring to the establishment of a centralized adoption agency was not accepted by the participants. They saw the need for a centralized information bank of prospective adoptive parents and children, but not the replacement of private agencies with a central agency.
- e) Foster parents rights should be reviewed and established in legislation.
- f) the Family Court should be given jurisdiction over section 243.4 of the Criminal Code related to "uttering threats" and adoption.
- g) Section 99 of the Education Act should be reviewed immediately and its usefulness or lack, thereof, addressed. It was suggested the H.E.S.S. Committee might be the appropriate mechanism to undertake the review.

PLENARY SESSION

June 23, 1987

NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY
Afternoon Plenary Session - June 23, 1987

Opening Remarks - Reverend Father Gregory MacKinnon,
Chief Rapporteur

I am delighted to be a participant in this Conference, to hear your discussions and to realize all the competence and compassion there is in this group. I found that very impressive and congratulate you for it. I think this has been an honest effort to look at serious problems and come up with solutions. Somebody said that everyone is always looking for solutions but solutions are not the answer. I do not know exactly what that means.

I want to acknowledge first of all the contribution of all of you, who are delegates and, particularly, the chairpersons and the rapporteurs. The way that everyone stuck to the task and saw it through is, I think, truly remarkable and admirable. I think you will all want me to say, too, a word of appreciation to the group of competent people who planned this conference. I have been very impressed with them. I have been working with them for some time, principally by letter and by telephone, but I have gotten to know them rather well in the last two days and this is one of the best run conferences that I have ever had anything to do with.

We opened the conference with a speech by the Minister on Sunday night. He told us some important things as we began. You will recall he told us to find out what will not do and discover what will do -- very important advice. He also reminded us that we should do no harm. That is always good advice, also, perhaps particularly in the very sensitive areas in which you deal. He wanted us to look to the future and build for the future and he told us that he was not looking particularly for a shopping list or a catalogue that would merely be a means of spending more money, but he was looking for surer priorities and greater coordination. This of course is tied in with the purpose of

the conference, which is to provide an opportunity for the delegates to consider and comment upon the recommendations of the Task Force on Family and Children's Services, and to provide the Minister of Social Services with the delegates recommendations in respect to the Task Force Report. I think that that has been accomplished. It is my impression, at least, that the first purpose of providing an opportunity for delegates to consider and comment upon the recommendations of the Task Force has been achieved through the fifteen workshop sessions and the participation of the 300 delegates. The second purpose, providing the recommendations, will be achieved in several ways. We have had this rather well-oiled procedure of reports being filed with the Conference chairpersons and these will be used as a touchstone for consideration as the Minister, the Department and government proceeds with the implementation of the Report.

All of the written reports that were submitted will be preserved and I think they will be of great use. I would like to say that I consider this a rather courageous thing. Perhaps not rather, but a very courageous thing that the Minister has done. He has received this Report and everybody knows that the lot of many Task Force Reports is to end up on a shelf somewhere. I do not see any way of that happening now. It might have had that fate if it were received and then perhaps gradually over the years implemented. But, I think the Minister had courage to come out and ask you, the practitioners, what you thought of this Report. It is going to be very difficult now just to let it lie on a shelf somewhere, but I think he is honestly looking for your views on this very important question, and how to proceed, what priority should be given, and how the implementation should go.

There were a number of common themes in all the discussions. I would like to run over these quickly and then I would like to come to the reports from each of the groups. I shall try to summarize those and I think you will notice that there are recurring questions. I thought at one point of trying to group these all together but then on

reflection I thought that it might be a little more impressive to hear the repetition and I think that gives more the flavour of the Conference.

It is very clear in the general themes that there is very wide support for the Task Force Report. Many people have said that not only do they agree with the recommendations that have been made, but they also agreed with the priority given to the recommendations in the top ten. There were some of course, who differed and wanted to change some things but essentially I think it is true to say that there is a consensus here, that this is a good Report and it should be implemented.

Another theme is that training is needed and on-going training is essential. It is not enough to appear on the job with a degree. Orientation for new employees, new workers, is essential and the continuing education of those who are already in the field is necessary. I have been told, I have no way of knowing this on my own, that it is essential that in this on-going education that the management and supervisory staff should be included.

Coordination and a multi-disciplinary approach to problems of the family was also highlighted time after time. There is strong support for the idea of the HESS Committee's work and a need to strengthen it. Very frequently the notion came up that the Attorney General's Department should be involved in that process as well.

Another theme that has recurred in every group was the support for the caseload reduction. I think everyone sees that as essential.

You will recall that the Minister in the opening speech, gave a rather clear mandate or it might even have been described as a challenge. I would like to quote him on the matter of family policy, "I hope that the workshop on Family Policy particularly will commence its deliberations from the starting point of this fundamental recommendation and go forward here at the Conference reflecting upon and recommending what such a policy on the family should contain, how it

could be implemented and made operational and what will be the consequences of its adoption on other policies and programs." That was a challenge, but a rather difficult one, and I think you will see in a moment that I think that particular group had some difficulty in answering all the questions that the Minister posed.

Another common theme was the importance of prevention and early intervention of service to try to avoid problems rather than settle them after they have occurred.

Additional new staff required immediately. That also is related of course to the other one that got such universal support the caseload reduction.

There was a plea for a recognition of the cultural differences in our province. In one of the groups that I attended for a short time, the Foster Care Group, the point was made that it is very difficult to get uniformity across our Province because there are such different cultural groups and that what might be viewed as an excellent foster home in one part of the Province would not be suitable in another part. I think that is a rather interesting point. We are a small province but we have great variety and anyone who has travelled extensively around the province as the members of the Task Force did, will, I think, support that notion.

There was alot of discussion, too, and a recurring theme on the question of community based services - the local versus the regional versus the centralized services. There was quite a bit of tension at various times and in various topics on this question of centralized versus the localized service. There is obviously a place for both but I think it is perhaps healthy that there is a bit of tension.

In Services to Families the question of Municipal Assistance is a very live question and one I think that needs in the view of most of the delegates some rather early attention.

Those were the common themes that I noted, but I would like to come now to the question of what I recorded as I read the reports from each group. I have not tried to include everything because that would take us forever but I have tried to highlight the important questions and I have taken them in the order, alphabetical order actually, starting with administration. In administration, the caseload question was the main recommendation - caseload reduction with particular attention to child protection. The suggestion was made that we should begin now to identify areas in the Province where the need is the greatest and this should be the number one priority so say the group on administration. Continuing education of staff, including management and supervisors, should continue. There was some fear expressed that the training that has been adopted recently might be short-term and I think a number of people have insisted that it would be a great disaster if that were to cease. They feel that on-going resources must be put into staff training.

The settlement issue should be addressed. Much time we were told is wasted on administering the present arrangement.

The second issue is adoption. There was a plea that a higher priority be given to this service. This could be accomplished through the appointment of a coordinator and more staff. There is an appeal also for uniform standards for assessments and home studies and then perhaps if this is not squaring the circle, there was a plea also that with those uniform standards there should be a preservation of present flexibility. Now, perhaps the Minister can figure out how that can be done. How we could have uniform standards and flexibility at the same time might create a bit of a problem. There was a strong view that third party adoptions should give way to open adoptions and that single mothers might be involved in choosing "a good home" for their children. I think perhaps the most diplomatic way I can put this next issue is as follows: There was not universal support for a centralized adoption agency or service, but there was concern about the effect of a province-wide register on the large child placing agencies. There is a strong feeling that post-adoptive services need support. Everyone was

of that view and also that training for adoption workers was essential as well.

A coordinated multi-disciplinary approach to child abuse was needed which differentiated between investigative assessment staff and the treatment staff. This seems like just good plain common sense, that the person who has to act as the bad guy can scarcely turn around and be a counsellor to the people with whom he/she has been dealing.

The group on child abuse were adamant that number three, the caseload question, remain number three. They wanted to add to number seven of the top ten recommendations, counselling and treatment services for families and victims of abuse be developed and with that recommendation number seven then be made number one recommendation in the panel report. They insisted, urged, that the Attorney General's Department become part of the HESS Committee. They saw a great need for education for medical, legal and police people on the question of child abuse. They recognized also the needs of minority groups - the Acadiennes, the Blacks and the Native people and they made a new recommendation that was not contained in the Task Force Report that perpetrators of child abuse be given special attention and treatment. They made another recommendation which, I think, probably would be quite controversial and I think the people who made this are prepared to speak to it later in the second part of this session but as I read it, it was a request to create an independent body to evaluate the progress of the implementation of the Task Force recommendations to which the HESS, plus the Attorney General's Department, is accountable. I do not know just how one could order that given our system of government however, we shall probably hear more about that in a little while.

There was support for the day care recommendation. There was a request for urgent need to train social workers to investigate child sexual abuse and, I just thought this was a lovely expression, that perpetrators of child abuse should be put in a "preventive context."

The fourth group is the family policy and coordination of services. This group made the suggestion and it sounds like a good one, that numbers one and two, the first two recommendations in the top ten, should be described as principles rather than recommendations and that they are sort of the bedrock upon which everything else is built. It is noted, however, that Nova Scotia is being quite innovative in seeking to adopt a policy and I think everyone feels good about that and particularly good that that recommendation has already been accepted as we were told by the Minister, on the first night. This group said that the implementation of the Report and particularly the principles in the family policy, should follow the least intrusive principle. They support the concept of HESS but then they showed a little bit of creativity by saying it is time now to stop "HESS"-itating. I think almost every group heard an appeal for greater bilingual services in those parts of the province where there is a substantial number of Acadiennes.

Family Violence was number five and everyone agreed that a provincial protocol is needed. There was a strong feeling also that perpetrators should be removed from the matrimonial home and that if legislation is needed to be able to effect that, that should be pursued. There was a plea for educational programs in the school and in the public, as well, and there was an appeal for fulltime Children's Service workers in Transition Houses. It was made very clear that these people would be more than babysitters and that the children in these situations are in need of expert assistance. There was an appeal for preventive programs such as pre-marriage courses, marriage enrichment courses and family life education. Perhaps family violence could be overcome if better preparation for marriage were made. This group also suggested that the Attorney General should be involved in the HESS Committee. They also asked for a follow-up conference in 1989.

Foster care was the next one. The group wanted greater emphasis placed on foster families as the central resource for placement of children, including additional and alternative support for children in care such as specialized foster homes and a network of foster homes. There is great concern about the question of permanency and the group

was interested in legislation to recognize the value of permanency planning. They also urged an aggressive and responsive recruitment of foster families and, one rather innovative suggestion from this group, was that a summer camp of foster parents and children in foster homes and potential foster parents from all over the province be held. It was pointed out that the best recruiters of foster parents are other foster parents and the summer camp would be a good way of assuring that people are well informed for the undertaking of this responsibility. They suggested that a mechanism be developed for agencies to list names of perspective foster parents to ensure that they are not on the child abuse registry. There was an appeal that foster parents should be granted legal recognition as interested persons in Court and that, probably, would require legislation as well. There was concern about the children who are in and out of foster homes and it was suggested there should be a limit to the number of times that the natural parents can apply to terminate permanent wardship and they want an examination of conditions under which a child repeatedly comes into voluntary care. It was pointed out that sometimes at the beginning of the school year children are put into foster homes and provided with what is necessary for the school year and then, after they get equipped, go back to their own homes. I think that underlines a real problem. Some parents are just not able to provide what is needed for children to go to school and they have sought a solution in this way.

Legislation. The main recommendation of the Legislation Workshops is that a review of the Children's Services Act be undertaken. They also suggested that a Unified Family Court be studied. I think everyone recognizes there are problems and difficulties in doing anything about that but it does not mean that it should not be looked at. They also suggested that the coordination of resources which is one of the main thrusts of the whole Task Force Report, should extend to the legal process.

Residential Facilities. They affirmed ten number one as their main recommendation. A coordinator of Services to Adolescents and Residential Services got their full support but they did say that this

coordinator needed a clear mandate and that that mandate should be developed in cooperation with existing residential services. They were rather insistent that the coordination of residential facilities is a fulltime position. The person to undertake it would have plenty of work to do without having other duties. There was a statement that the current system of residential facilities too often segments the needs of the child and again an appeal for something the Minister mentioned on Sunday night, a wholistic approach, remembering that the child is a person. There was concern expressed for mentally handicapped children too and again a bit of common sense that the child should be kept in his or her own home whenever possible. When children are being prepared to go back to their homes after being in a residential facility, counselling of family should occur before the child's return.)

Services to Adolescents. They were very supportive of the idea of a coordinator of Services to Adolescents and Residential Facilities as well. They spoke about the need for bilingual services and legislation to allow parents to charge their own adolescents with unmanageability. They asked also that there be a reinforcement of homemaking services.

Services to Families. There were some very good things in this report I think. Again, it sounds like common sense but recognizing the basic fundamental importance of the family, they said it is necessary that each family be provided with financial support to function effectively to do the things that society expects the family to do. This is perhaps something we take for granted and do not zero in on. They talked about other things, too, that are so important to the family, full employment, job training, recognition of a parent's work at home as a job-worthy of remuneration. They also said that they agreed with the idea that there should be lighter caseloads but they said that in doing that it was important that agencies be obliged to provide appropriate support and expertise for groups designed to assist families. In other words, they want the people with the lighter caseload to be able to work more effectively with families. Again, the bilingual question was noted. Family life education was also noted by the Workshops on Services to Families. Greater recognition of the role of volunteers was

underlined and there was an appeal that the specific needs of rural families be recognized because sometimes they do not get the attention that they should.

Services to the Handicapped. I have heard from several sources that there is some criticism of the Task Force Report in that the question of the handicapped did not receive very much attention. I think that is going to be addressed later on in the panel so I will not dwell on it now. But the points that were made in the groups were that early intervention is very important, priority should be given to human resources and a continuum of education is essential and again the criticism of the Task Force paying only cursory attention to this question.

I am very conscious of the fact that I have not touched on everything but there will be an opportunity when the panel assembles in a few minutes for anyone to bring up any other questions that I have missed. I have tried to focus your attention on the ones that seemed to be the most important as I listened and as I read your reports. I think we are a little bit ahead of schedule but I think I shall invite Bessie and David to join me now for the rest of the program.

I think both David and Bessie have a few things that they would like to add so I invite Bessie to start, followed by David and then we will throw the meeting open for discussion from the floor.

Remarks - Workshop and Task Force Co-Chairs

Bessie Harris

Thank you Father MacKinnon. I will say just a very few words to you. As I told the Rapporteurs and Chairs when we met with them throughout the workshops, I do not think I heard a great deal that was different from what is in the Task Force Report. As Father MacKinnon said, there is a little bit of re-ordering and the one thing that came

through clearly was that people wanted to have more specificity in the recommendations and thought that the Task Force had been a bit remiss in that it had not explained some of the recommendations a bit more clearly in the text. I think that was a deliberate thing on the part of the Task Force, in that we did have a great deal of discussion obviously on each issue and each area of services or programs and we did come up with some recommendations that were fairly specific, but many of them remained a bit general and that was to leave room for the frosting to be put on the cake by further discussion and consultation with agencies and, of course, that is what is happening here. I am pleased to see the reaction to the recommendations on family policy and coordination of services. The family policy area as I heard in workshops and as Father said, came out as being a matter of principle rather than a recommendation in most of them. I think that is true, the family policy should perhaps be the principle on which services are based. When we made the recommendation in the Task Force Report we talked a good deal about it and we decided to put it in as a recommendation rather than a principle for the very reason that we felt it would be given greater attention if it was a recommendation. The coordination of services was interesting to me in that what I heard people say was that they felt that as parents they should be the primary coordinators of service on behalf of their own children but that there were some instances in which a facilitator/coordinator is needed. Perhaps it is more a matter of accessibility and availability of services from the parental point of view than it is the coordination of services for many parents. That does not negate the fact that there is a need amongst the many professions that are involved in provision of services to families and children to coordinate the services amongst themselves. There are many other things I could say. I am not going to hold up this session by doing that. I am going to hand it over to David so he can make a few remarks.

David Stevenson

I think we recognize after the work that we have gone through together, that we still have alot of work to do in the future. One of

the concerns that I am finding I am giving attention to right away is how to increase public understanding of the matters which are affecting children. I appreciate the opportunity that we have had in these days to discuss and to try to make sure that our points of view with one another are clear. I can see in the future that as we carry the discussion into the public that there will be more people who will come to have an understanding of the points that we are sharing in our time together here.

One of those concerns I think has to be the question of where a child best belongs, and I know from comments that people have made outside of the sessions that there may be a question as to whether or not we have had a balance in what we have tried to say. We knew when we began, and we know now that in many cases, a child is better off with his own family and his natural family even with difficulties - not with abuses but even with difficulties. We have looked to a balance between the short term and the long term and, yes, we gave you a report which is in chapters. We hope that as we continue to look at the words that are there that there will be recognition that we had to address issues that are of concern for us today and need to be corrected now, but also a concern for the long term which is written sometimes within the same recommendation. I would ask you please, as you do look to some recommendations again, to find the long term concerns we also expressed even as we asked for something to happen now.

There was a question that came up about early intervention. Early intervention broadened in the discussion to mean early provision of services. We appreciated the translation of the recommendation which is in the chapter on services to handicapped children. We meant it to be a program but many people now have broadened in their thinking to suggest that the service should come early to many children to prevent what many now face. That is very much appreciated.

Throughout the report, prevention is meant to be a theme. In every chapter prevention is meant to be a theme. It would be our wish

and I believe you shared in the comments that are made, that let's get out of the way of the crisis so that we can get on with the work that we want to do.

I have several other points that I want to make as we go along. The last one that I would like to address at the moment is one I did not hear very much but I think it needs to be said. Our province is mostly rural area and to the best of our ability I think we are saying that we have to make sure the service gets to those people where they live as far as we can take it to them. That is always difficult. Those people who live in urban areas, who spend most of their time in urban areas, tend sometimes to forget that there are people who live a rural way of life. It is a long drive sometimes to service which is close by people who are living down the street. We have to be sensitive in our province and we heard it in representations that were made to us. We have written it in some places. We have said it in different ways. Service which is uniformly available insofar as we can afford to provide it, and in the same way service which is available to all of our cultural communities insofar as it is appropriate, to make such service available not separately but as part of the pattern, and I think there are themes such as this which if they did not receive the wording, certainly the intent was there. Thank you.

Father MacKinnon - I would like to invite now any comments from the floor. Any questions that have not been noted or anyone that has anything they would like to add. There are two microphones in the aisle. We invite you to use the microphones please. Perhaps it would be well to identify yourself to it.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD (The content has been edited only to correct/remove unclear or superfluous words and phrases)

Speaker - Joyce Halpern

I am Joyce Halpern and I assisted with the Panel on Coordination and I guess one of the things that was omitted, and I feel really remiss

in not mentioning it because it was dealt with to such a degree, was concern that the Task Force Report is built on a definition of the family and that in all three sessions, and we had close to 90 participants, there was almost unanimous agreement that the definition of family needs to be broadened. The one disagreement of the 90 was not a disagreement with that in principle but a recognition that maybe that definition was purely political and so would agree to it for political purposes, so 90 out of 90 approximately, agreed that that definition needs to be broadened and would appreciate recognition of that.

David Stevenson - I get the chance to respond to this one because as some people know, we have already had a go at it. I say with the greatest of respect that it is an awful lot easier to broaden the definition from what it is now and I think that is the correct way to move and I appreciate the point that is being made. The Panel on Services to Families first dealt with the definition, not one time, not twice, but through many, many sessions there were many definitions looked at. Some were far more functional in nature, that is, containing the second part of the definition that is in the Report. They did not speak to the membership of a family but spoke about what a family does. In the end we found that that was not completely satisfactory, because in all that we were saying, we should be speaking about who is in a family. A family is not just a group of interested people gathering together or people who happen to have a particular interest and call themselves a family. We were aware, partly, of the legislative implications, the definitions which are contained in such places as the Children's Services Act, sometimes different from others. Certain people are considered members of families in certain age groups for purposes of legislation, then you look to another place and there is another thought. We did have a political problem as a group, not political in the sense of party but political in the sense of public opinion as to how broad a definition to provide. It was not in our interest to make the definition so broad that it could include every circumstance in society in 1987 but rather to move somewhat from the more traditional position but make it possible to include the many blendings, the separations, reconstitutions of family which exist today

and at the same time not to include what we would not consider to be family. As soon as we start putting by blood, by marriage, by adoption - as soon as we start putting such limiting words, yes, there is going to be perhaps another word that people would prefer to have there. I invite those of you who would prefer a broader definition to share it with me. The discussion on that definition once started could go on for some time.

Speaker - Father Vernon Boutilier

Mr. Chairman, I am Vern Boutilier, Director of Diocesan Charities in the Diocese of Antigonish. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this (the definition) but before doing so I see the Minister present, and in the name of many participants here, express to him our appreciation for the courage to relate to this issue and conference. Back in 1980 I had the good fortune to be an official delegate, observer-delegate, to the American Conference on the Family in Baltimore representing Canada that was called by President Carter and it worked out to be a disaster because of the division which ensued. The division which was very violent in its opposition and in its fighting. We are very pleased that you have had the courage to address the issue and in this particular context. One of my priorities is on this family policy question and the coordination of services, and one of the items which I would like to suggest, and, I have suggested it in a couple of other considerations, is a way to deal with this issue which divided the American Conference in 1980.

The definition of family that we might want to consider that has a broad enough focus to relate to all forms and at the same time respond to the key issues, is that the family be regarded as an intimate community of life and love and the principle means through which we carry on. The reason why I am saying that is, while the conflict comes from the multiple forms that family is expressed in, and the multiple forms are getting alot of attention, we still are talking about 88% of the families that are traditional two-parent situations and this form can relate to that. As well, I think that to put a principle or a policy for family forth one has to address the ideology that one is striving for

and we as professionals know the distinction clearly between empathy and sympathy. We must have a true, realistic empathetic approach and recognition and support of all forms the family does take, but we must not be dominated by our personal sympathetic responses to a particular one or the other and I think that that particular definition at the same time supports the 88%. It does allow a clear recognition because in each of those forms we are talking of some form of community which is intimate, and it is a commitment in those cases to either love or to life so I throw this in while at the same time congratulating the Minister.

Father MacKinnon - Does anyone else wish to speak to this question of the definition of the family?

The next speaker was Jim MacCormack.

I am not going to speak directly to the definition although I think it needs clarification but a point that concerned me throughout this conference is that many families, as a matter of fact, most families, will never necessarily come to us in the context in which we now sit. In other words, most of what we are defining is in terms of a social service perspective and many families we just do not deal with. So, when we talk about family policy we have to talk in broad enough terms to support the kinds of things that are common to families so that we do not take the curative crisis oriented intervention approach. Certainly, the future of families cannot be built on the structured intervention of social services and I think I am so encouraged. To me this is absolutely the most significant conference that I have ever attended and I think what we are trying to do here is of the utmost of importance but we have to, especially when we talk of family policy for the province, must keep in mind that we have to do it from a perspective that goes beyond the particular concerns of interest groups such as day care people, transition home people and others. When we talk of things, I think we have to be looking at the idea of dignifying the role of family, of parents, of children and when we look at aspects, for example, from my part we talked a lot about maintenance, and we should have to ask ourselves questions like what is it that we are really

trying to maintain. Sometimes we lose sight of that and get caught up in the mechanics of it so I think when we and the Task Force renews its commitment and looks at this, I would hope that at least they will do it from a broad perspective, especially if they are talking about a provincial policy on the family.

Father MacKinnon - any other comments on the topic?

The next speaker was Joy Kennedy.

The word prevention is a word you have to be careful of. I am glad it is on the agenda finally because for a long time a lot of us have fought to get it on the agenda. Now that prevention is there, I think we have to look beyond it and, to carry on with what you were saying, I think we have to look at wellness. Are we not trying to prevent the great tearing apart of the themes of society which I think have been built on wellness and health in terms of family life.

David Stevenson

I would like to respond to that. We have used the word prevention in a very broad perspective and I appreciate the point that you are making about wellness. I think we have used the word prevention somewhat as a counterpoise to the situation of crisis in which we find ourselves trying to catch up. Trying to get beyond the case that was phoned in this morning which has set our agenda for today.

We almost got caught at one point in our work in describing the stages of prevention and getting hung up in that process. We back away from that. If we can, in the next relatively short period of time, be it a year, be able to move to the point where we have an opportunity to devote more time to preventive measures, to measures which increase the feeling of well being within our communities, it might be that we will reach the point that you have just made. That would be our wish as we have participated in writing the report and I think

that you have expressed a concern that many people would have; that it is not just to prevent but it is to reach a stage of thinking which calls well the normal stage.

Speaker - Bill McCarron

Just two points that I would like to make with regard to the discussions that came out of the Services to Adolescents workshops. In that particular section there were three recommendations; one for legislative change, one for a coordinator and a third one for the establishment of regional crisis/assessment centres. In the reporting back the one for the regional crisis/assessment centres was not reflected and I think the feeling in the group was that, that was a very critical recommendation in terms of the types of services that are currently needed for adolescents in the province who are out of control. Subsequent to that, all three groups felt that the establishment of regional crisis and assessment centres was only one part of a system of services that was needed. Prevention must come before and a range of treatment and placement options must be developed at the same time as part of the whole system, otherwise the crisis and assessment centres will quite quickly bottleneck and back up and not deliver the service. The other point I wish to make was with regard to the reporting of some mechanism whereby parents can charge their children; that, I think, came from the 'tough love' philosophy which we have been exposed to here through parts of the Conference. However, within the group on Services to Adolescents, while the group felt a need to identify with an empathy for parents who are going through a crisis with their adolescents, they also felt that there were other ways to access help, other ways to deal with the crisis that might be more amenable treatment than to simply establish some kind of a mechanism where you can charge your child and have them remanded to a facility.

Speaker: Bessie Harris

Bill, I would like to respond to your remarks related to crisis/assessment centres. That recommendation was highlighted in the Report, of course, because one of the things that happened to the Task Force during discussions was that we came to a recognition of the fact that we really could not address exactly what the service needs were in terms of treatment facilities and in terms of community support at this point in time. We did not know what the actual numbers of children out there were, who needed what type of facility or what type of community support. We thought the crisis/assessment centres might give us at least an avenue through which to look at some of the children who are being referred now on a crisis basis and determine what their exact needs are, e.g., are their needs for support in the community, are their needs for closed treatment facilities, or are their needs for an intermediary type of treatment? I think there was a recognition that it is just not one small piece we need to build in the system but a totality as your group has said.

Speaker: Rev. Bill Newell

Mr. Chair, I am the President of the Family and Children's Services of Yarmouth and also Chairman of the Presidents' Committee which meets with the Minister from time to time and gives him no little headaches. I would like to voice our concerted and unanimous support for this last statement on the assessment centres. At the time the Task Force was dealing with that we were also dealing with it in our discussions with the Minister and certainly we, in reviewing the Task Force Report from our perspective as service delivery agencies across this Province representing fourteen various agencies, felt that this was a very high priority item and one that was long overdue and the sooner that it got in place the better our services to the youth of our province would be. So, I would just like to add our endorsement to that recommendation and say to the panel and to the Minister go for it with our blessing.

Speaker: Larry Gauthier Project New Start in Halifax

I would like to ask Father MacKinnon about one of the recommendations dealing with family violence, recommendation 3(b), funding for self-help and support programs for victims and perpetrators. I did not hear that brought up and that was something that constantly was brought up during the workshops and I am just wondering what your comments are regarding that.

Father MacKinnon - Certainly I agree that it is very important. I guess I missed it when I was making up my notes but I am glad that you highlighted it because I certainly think it is important.

Speaker: David Stevenson

If I may continue on that particular point. There is a series of questions which arose from the discussion about family violence - how we reduce it, how we remove it, how we get rid of it. I have to share concern with you and ask if there might be some discussion about the relationship between the two tier welfare system and the connection with family violence. The idea that perhaps within education we can plant the seeds to reduce the possibility of family violence. I am not sure if we have the means as yet to eliminate a very serious problem in our society and perhaps as the sessions continue there may be others who would like to speak to this matter.

Speaker: Susan Pierle - Cobequid Mental Health Centre

In keeping with the comment that had been raised about services, particularly for perpetrators, one of the things that came out of several of the workshops that I attended was the need, not particularly for social services to provide the services themselves, but as Father MacKinnon eluded to earlier, the coordination and cooperation of services. It was seen as being very helpful if social services would see their role as providing support for couples and families in the concept of marital and family counselling, and be very instrumental in working with the Attorney General's office and the Department of Health in

terms of providing other services, for example, to the victims and to the perpetrators. The other comment that I wanted to make, and I felt it was very important, is that in the group I attended this morning on child abuse, we made a major recommendation for change in terms of recommendation 6.1, involving the Medical Society.

Speaker: Dan O'Brien - Director of the Maritime School of
Social Work, Dalhousie University

If I may offer a comment and then follow-up with a question. First, my comment. I would like to echo the previous speakers who congratulated the Minister and his staff on convening an excellent workshop on Family and Children's Services. I get the privilege of attending all too many conferences and I must say that this ranks among the top in terms of the timeliness, the pace, the organization, the manner, the good spirit in which the proceedings have unfolded so, again, I would congratulate the folks responsible. My other comment relates to those portions of the recommendations which address the training needs and educational needs of service delivery personnel. Obviously, I have a biased point of view with respect to that issue and I simply would like to say that the School of Social Work is prepared to commit its resources to assisting the Department in carrying out many of the recommendations which pertain to additional educational development considerations. My question. What happens next? You alluded to it in your earlier comments but I'd like some comment from the panel as to where we go from here. Thank you.

Father MacKinnon - I am going to ask one or other of the panel members to respond.

Speaker - Bessie Harris

I am not quite sure I can answer your question fully but shall try to answer it at least partially. The proceedings of this conference are to be made a public document so there will be a record of it and, of course, a record of all the recommendations and suggestions that have

been made, so we are not going to drop this here and now. Also, the Minister in his opening remarks, mentioned that at least 37 of the recommendations are being addressed in one way or another by the Department at this point in time, so, there is already some action underway to address some of the things in the report. Many of the recommendations and the changes that we have heard from you today and over the last couple of days in relation to activities which should be undertaken perhaps in a slightly different way in which the Task Force suggested, will also be examined further by the Department and, hopefully, some activity will take place on those as well. I cannot tell you exactly where we are going, perhaps the Minister would like to address you for a few minutes and tell you where he thinks we are going from here.

Speaker: The Honourable Edmund L. Morris

I want to thank you very much Bessie. Reverend Father and my fellow conferees, I came this afternoon again, as I have been doing at the workshops, to listen and not to speak but this matter is a matter of prime importance. I can only say that the evidence of things seen should be taken as an earnest intent of things to be. It is a fact that we appointed the Task Force. We were not required to. We were not even urged to. When the Task Force reported and as I have said in the keynote address the other evening, Sunday evening, we had already committed ourselves to the Conference on the Family. I did report that we had taken thirty-seven of sixty-five recommendations in hand. They will not all come out simultaneously. Indeed, some may not come out for some time. The remaining twenty-eight will also be exposed to the same calm and even consideration. All of the proceedings, everything that is said here will be taken into careful account. It needs, in the interests of honesty, to say that we cannot do all of the things that are urged upon us at one time. I do not mean to be frivolous when I say in response to Dan O'Brien's inquiry where do we go from here. We go from here to dinner. (Audience applause.) And importantly so. (Audience applause.) The premier of the Province will be on his way from Halifax now. He will be here tonight.

He speaks by the will of the democratic ethos of our society for the best sentient in our province. He will be meeting, shortly, this afternoon, with Reverend Father President, Bessie, David and myself. We will bring to his attention not only the Task Force Report recommendations with which he is closely familiar, but what we have heard here and what Father President has so felicitously summarized. We hope that the Premier as leader of the government will be able to reflect upon those before 7:30 p.m. tonight. We hope that the Premier will be able to say what it is he and his Minister will be directed to do as a consequence of the Conference. I can only tell you that we mean to move forward. Many of you have heard me tell an anecdote about beautiful Fenvrai overlooking arm of gold. I simply want to repeat it. On the walls of the Ministerial Lobby in the Johnston Building in Halifax are inscribed great words. They were taken from Edward Everett Hale. They were handwritten with his forefinger by Alexander Graham Bell in the palm of the hand of Helen Keller. I myself remember writing as a child in my grandmother's hand. Many in our Province did until recent years, communicate by handwriting in the palm of hearing impaired persons. Alexander Graham Bell took Helen Keller's hand one day and he wrote these words. Let them be Father President, a sure toxin for our Conference. We cannot do everything but we can do something, and because, not in spite of, and because we cannot do everything, we will do the something we can do. (Audience applause.)

Speaker: Gail MacDougall - Special Committee on Child Sexual Abuse,
Halifax

I would like to comment on one aspect of the process of the Task Force which has been exciting for those of us in agencies - the openness and dialogue in the process of discussion which has gone on. I think it has given us an airing of issues and concerns that has been long overdue and certainly I think has been very productive. In response, I am following up on what Dan said about where do we go from here. I would like to see the process of consultation continued. I would like to see the open and honest airing of discussion of ideas and issues pursued because I think it enriches the practice and the

service that is given to families. Throughout the day, and in the workshops, the HESS or soon to be the HESSAG Committee, has had an awful lot of expectations placed upon it. I would like to see the ongoing input, consultation and setting of objectives not go inhouse so that we lose contact or we lose the richness of the dialogue that goes on between the people who provide the direct services, the people who manage the agencies, the support groups who are involved. So, somehow, and I do not have the answer for them, but I raise it as a matter for consideration, I would like to see the dialogue, the communication, a monitoring or in the friendly sense, as we use friendly supervision, of the HESS Committee's activities undertaken so that we do not lose touch and we can continue to dialogue about the issues that are important and continue to re-look at the priorities that have been set and what we do with them.

Speaker: David Stevenson

Gail, I appreciate you making the comments you just have. I think in response to the question perhaps we all began our part in this when we responded to the call for submissions to the Task Force. I do not think that process has ended and I think that all of us each in the association to which we belong have the responsibility of ensuring that the momentum that has been started never ends, because, what we are talking about is the betterment of family and because each of us in our responsibility, whether it be in social services most directly, in health or in education or within law enforcement; bring a point of view to the question of where do we go from here, must always seek that next step. There are some more formal associations through which we can do that and we draw your attention to the what I consider to be the most important role which the Nova Scotia Family and Child Welfare Association should play henceforth, as it has played in years passed. That is an Association which has shown the lead outside of the Department. Outside of government, outside of the department, each of us has a role that we can play and I hope that we will be inspired to do so.

Speaker: Dr. John Anderson - I.W.K. Hospital

I have seen too many burned out protection workers in the past fifteen years and I would urge the Department of Social Services to try to fine tune and study the caseloads in recommendation three with regard to protection cases. Rural and urban caseloads and workloads vary tremendously. Physical, sexual, emotional and incest caseloads are widely variable in time commitments. Cases before the Family Court and criminal justice system are enormously time consuming. I urge you to refine and study the number of 30 cases per worker to fit the workload and not just the caseload.

Speaker: Ruby Lavers - Delegate, The National Youth in Care Network

I am a youth in care. I am thankful to be here because we do have alot to contribute and I am happy the people do realize that now. In May I was lucky enough to attend an Independence Camp with a bunch of youth in care and I would just like to bring up a few of their valid fears and needs which they expressed to me. One of the things youth in care wanted was to get more involved in what is going on with us and to us and around us. We feel one of our fears is being caught without adequate education after our termination date. We are afraid that once our wardship is terminated we will go onto welfare because of lack of education. What we hope to do is get support extended to pass twenty-one. We are not saying put us through college for the next ten years but if we turn twenty-one and we have two months left before we get our degree do not cut us off, please. We will be willing to even chip in out of our own pockets but we are just afraid of getting caught with our pants down. Another thing is that we need more facilities for the preparation for independence. There is a real need for it because a lot of the things that are taken for granted like doing the laundry, sewing, just simple things like that - the things you take for granted - a lot of people (wards) do not know how to do them. We need more places that we can learn to do things so we can become productive members of society. Thank you.

Speaker: Father MacKinnon

When I was reporting on the Services to Adolescents, one of this morning's groups had a very strong recommendation for a change in legislation to allow for the sixteen to eighteen year group to continue in voluntary care. Your suggestion is that it should go beyond that and I think that is very interesting.

Speaker: David Stevenson

Some of us have had recent discussions about the need to understand the role that an agency plays as, in effect, the family for youth who are in care. We must understand that within the agency we have to make youth in care feel that they are not abandoned. There may be legislation but it cannot replace a sense of responsibility that we must have for those who are a part of the group that we service. I appreciate the comments that have been made. We do not want in any sense to abandon anyone, there has been enough abandonment in our society.

Speaker: Marilyn Peers - Executive Director of the
Children's Aid Society of Halifax and President of the
Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers

From both groups I want to commend the Minister for this wonderful first Conference on the Family. I was in Sydney when you announced it several years ago and indeed it seemed a long way off. It has been one of the most exciting experiences for us all. In this type of work we can tend to work in isolation and feel that we are the only ones that are working so hard and ask why is it that it is all on our shoulders. I think what we found in our opportunities here for sharing and looking together at the families that we are all serving is that there are, indeed, support networks all around us and we become more appreciative than ever of that. Thank you very much for a wonderful Conference at a fee that our budgets could support. I would like to comment on the recommendation related to Social Assistance in this

Province and support the idea that shelter levels at least more accurately reflect actual costs. I do not think there is any more pervasive and detrimental influence on the family than to be living in poverty. For those of us in child welfare at least, the majority of our families are on assistance. We know all too well the effects of inadequate housing. Because of shelter limits, money must be taken from clothing and food to cover those costs. Workers spend inordinate amounts of time finding furniture and other things the families need. When I recall the results of the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers study on municipal assistance in this province and the impact of the levels and the maximums for families, truly the Task Force could not ignore the issue. We all urge that our overall assistance programs in this province be thoroughly reviewed and restructured to give families the basic supports they need for decent living.

Speaker: His Honour, Judge James Williams - Family Court
of Nova Scotia

I have had the privilege over a number of years of acting for child welfare agencies in child protection proceedings and my involvement in the process thus far has been primarily through the legislation panel and there is something I would like to say with respect to the focus on treatment and assessment. My experience in practicing law was that often treatment and assessment facilities and professionals were outside the Department of Social Services. It has been my feeling for a long time, and it continues to be my feeling, that the child protection area and particularly situations that are so extreme as to require Court intervention, are critical and need a commitment of resources. Often in my experience the assessment and treatment facilities, some of which are in place and under the administration of other Departments, are not accessible to protection workers, not accessible to the Courts and, most importantly, not accessible to the child. There is a tendency with some professionals to view the Court process as something that is outside reality. We do not deal with Court. Court is part of the reality. It is part of society's reaction to some of these situations. Judges, and I think I feel the responsibility

more even now, have a great responsibility, protection workers have a great responsibility and many decisions to make long before the matter comes to Court. I think that I would like to urge that HESS and whatever other committees come out of this, as a priority, commit not only resources in the Department of Social Services, but the treatment and assessment resources that exist now and the ones that will come about from this conference, to support the protection caseload as it proceeds to Court, to support appearances in Court, to provide to the Courts and to the Judges the professional expertise those assessments have. In this way the decisions that come from the Court will be informed decisions and decisions that are not just an end, but a start and hopefully form part of a prevention program so that those decisions prevent further problems instead of causing further problems.

Speaker: Father MacKinnon

If I could be permitted, I cannot resist one more humorous thing on HESS. One municipal administrator, I am sorry, elected person, in our group suggested that for HESS to be really effective it has to have a municipal component. So you know what that would make it -- a MHESS. I think that the frosting on the cake for this conference could possibly come in the next couple of hours. The Premier is coming. The Minister, as we all acknowledged, has made the most courageous stand in saying that he is committed to the notion of family policy and certainly I hope that you would join me in our endorsement and encouragement and I would direct this to the individuals who will meet with the Premier between now and 7:30 because certainly if we were to hear that the Premier of this Province endorsed the concept, as well, and committed himself to the development of a policy on the family, then I think that this conference would have been entirely and totally successful.

Speaker: Kelley Byard - Youth in Care Network

I would just like to thank the Minister and Elsie Blake for letting us attend this conference to hear what we have to say. It is an honour to be here. The main thing I want to see for all the youth in

care is the older youths have an opportunity to attend some of these meetings with the foster mothers and your Board of Directors.

Father MacKinnon - Are there any other issues to come up?

Speaker: Bob Lutz - Department of the Attorney General

I am encouraged by the fact that there are Family Court Judges here. The issues on assessment and treatment, I just wish to confirm, are extremely important. The perpetrator in my experience has been the last person supported and I think that the issues before the committee today are issues that the Minister should be commended upon and hopefully our department, the Attorney General's Department, will be of some assistance in the future.

Speaker: Joyce Beaudry - Sackville Family Day Care Program

Thank you. While I am here representing the day care community, I am here all by myself representing family day care. I want to take this opportunity to advocate for the concept of in-home child care and make specific reference to recommendation number nine where shift work, families in crisis, respite care, and all the various types of care are mentioned as needed for our children. We are in fact meeting that need on a small scale and I am endorsing the expansion of the concept. I also want to reiterate my thanks to everybody responsible for this conference and, in our struggle for a definition of the family, I am sure we will all agree that we here in these two and one-half days needed and have become quite a family. Thank you.

Speaker: Kathy Moggridge - Directorate, Federal Government

I do not know whether it is appropriate to speak or not, but I will. I guess in terms of response to David's comment with respect to family policy and family violence, in your consideration of the definition of a family I hope you look at the power relationships within a family and you do not lose sight of the individuals within a family. The

historical research has often showed that when you look at a family you forget the individuals, you forget how wealth is distributed within a family and that is how women and children become invisible. That is something that came up in the Family Violence workshop that I attended, as well as Services to Families. The whole issue of power relationships and sexual stereotyping must be addressed in, e.g., family life education, the roles of women and children, women and men, and young children and the realization we all have a role to play in society. The issue of equality will form part of in your family policy analysis.

Speaker: David Kurtz - Dartmouth Parent Support Group, Tough Love

First of all, I want to thank the people responsible for giving us the opportunity to appear at this conference. Until we heard the young fellow at the mike just a minute ago, my colleague and I thought that we were the only people here representing the users of your service but obviously that is not the case. We do not want to be seen in any light as an irritant to social services. In fact, we cannot really function at all without social services. We have had a lot of questions from people here with respect to our activities. We are not too well known in the Dartmouth/Halifax area. We have only been in existence about two years but we cordially invite anyone who has an interest, and I am sure most of you do, to contact us and sit in on our meetings if you wish to do so. We are not a clandestine outfit, we are quite open and I think you will find it interesting. We have certainly found this conference most helpful and we hope that we have been able to contribute something to the fine workers we have met here. We do not want to be seen as someone dealing with social services in the spirit of confrontation. We just cannot exist that way. We do not want that and I can see here the people that we have talked to that we certainly do not have that and I wish to thank you again for this opportunity and I hope if there is a future conference that we can be considered again.

Father MacKinnon - I would like to ask David to speak to the question of the handicapped that I mentioned in my review.

Speaker: David Stevenson

We have indicated that at some point during this session we would give a response to the concern that was raised about the amount of space devoted to services to handicapped children. I would ask you first of all when you have the opportunity to look to the mandate of the Task Force. It first of all spoke about the recommendations that were contained in the report from the Task Force on Homes for Special Care from 1984 and asked this Task Force to examine ways in which services to mentally handicapped children would relate currently to services within the Family and Children's Services Division. One of the questions which has not been answered and why the matter has come up is what happened as a result of that previous Task Force and Report and there is a substantial number of recommendations with that Report. We looked at those. The panel that was dealing with the question of services to handicapped children made reference to them and it is within the Department that the report would be dealt with, as will ours. We felt it would not further the cause to repeat the recommendations that were contained therein, but rather when we came to the point of writing the Report on Family and Children's Services, we felt that we should highlight several matters. The whole question of early intervention was one that came to our attention from many parts of the province and the question of in-home support, as well as, the need to maintain residential facilities which are now available for service to handicapped children.

We wanted to be careful that we gave a balanced representation in this area but we were in many respects outside of the mandate of the Family and Children's Services Division because the services to handicapped is contained elsewhere within the department. The way that we addressed that, in general, was to address to the Minister the possibility that since we are dealing with children primarily and with a handicap secondly, that it might be that services to handicapped children could fall within the broader perspective of Family and Children's Services. I hear though from the discussion that took place in workshops, the concern that if handicapped children were considered

within this Division that they might somehow be lost. I do not know which part is better to have downplayed, the fact that they are children, not the fact that they are handicapped. We were of the opinion that we should have a strong support for early intervention and that would be one of the services that would provide that support toward wellness which we had mentioned earlier. First and foremost, however, we were looking at children who have a role to play in our society, regardless of their handicap. We did not wish to highlight the handicap. We wished throughout the Report to highlight services to children and it was in that spirit that we devoted, but three and one-half pages to this topic.

Speaker: Elsie Blake - Executive Director of the Nova Scotia
Family and Child Welfare Association

The Board of Directors of the thirty-four agencies who belong to the Association have requested that we, as an association, go on record as supporting recommendation number three regarding workloads and perhaps I shall change the terminology there already since that has been one of my pet things. The Board of Directors has also indicated that recommendations four, seven and eight under Services to Families which deal with the need for review of municipal benefits and for support, so that parents can in fact parent, would in our view move into the top ten in terms of importance. It is basic in our view that shelter, food allowances and so forth be there. The third thing comes in the section on adoption. The Minister has been most helpful in negotiating with the federal government on the area of subsidized adoption and I think that the recommendation as written misrepresents the effort that he has put into trying to improve that service. Our Association has advocated for subsidized adoption repeatedly to him and he has taken that cause forward. We request again that he continue to do so because we believe that again the issue of finance is perhaps secondary to what you can provide to a child.

Speaker: Art Surette

I am one of those burnt-out child protection workers John referred to. I had the opportunity to work on the Child Abuse Panel. I am no longer working for Family and Children's Services. As part of our Child Abuse Panel one of the things we did talk about was the health or the welfare of the workers that are there and I would like to urge the Department, in fact, maybe even challenge the department to come up with policies to better look after their workers. Some of the things that could be done are not costly items and they could reflect some of the things that other groups do, for example, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. I am referring to such things as opportunities for educational or sabbatical leave, flexibility to change to other programs, and maybe possible salary deferral programs. I think our agencies are only as healthy as our workers are healthy and I think that we have to take a look at keeping those workers there if we are going to continue to provide service.

Speaker: Barbara Hayes - Naomi Society, Antigonish

I have heard alot of comments about the family and dignifying the role of the family. I would like to recommend verv strongly that we dignify the role of all members of the family - women and children. The fact is one in ten women is beaten and we see this violence again in sexual abuse of children. I would like to highly recommend that we place some emphasis, as Cathy has mentioned, on the role of sexual stereotyping and the power imbalances in the family and bring that into focus in this conference and in the work ahead. Thank you very much.

Speaker: Elaine Thimot

I was on the Panel Services to Families and in one of the workshops on Services to Families I was rather surprised about the way discussion on the day care recommendation turned. Maybe its because I spent alot of time working on this recommendation myself, but, however, I would like to make the point that I do not accept that day

care is a women's issue and that I strongly believe that if more fathers took a more active role in child rearing and child care that there might be less unmanageable children out there and there might be less family violence.

Speaker: Eleanor Fraser - Counsellor for the Town of New Glasgow

I have enjoyed the session immensely and while I am not involved directly with this area of social services, I would like to speak about the social assistance, that is, that which is given by municipalities and I would like to say that we have no harder working person than we have managing the social assistance in our area than the one that is presently there along with his staff. Many hours are spent on finding assistance at any time. It is very difficult at times to find shelter which is appropriate. We have also had problems, as every other area has in settlement, and that involves a lot because people are transient, they do move from place to place and to keep track of these things is also quite a job. So, all I wanted to say is that we will do our very best and I know that we are working very hard and with organizations such as the Tearman Society and other groups in our area, we will do our very best. Thank you very much.

Father MacKinnon - Is there anyone else?

Speaker: Marilyn Doucet, Chairperson of Southwest Nova Transition House

There has been a lot of talk about family violence this week, about what to do with perpetrators and what is going on out there. First of all, I would like to say that our transition house serves a tri-county area. There are eleven municipal units and they have all supported us from the start. Also, the provincial government, as far as the Minister Edmund Morris, has given us a lot of support and to all the houses in this province, and if we are ready to start and open a fifth or sixth house in the province, it is because the support comes from where it should and that is from the Department of Social Services. That is just a comment I want to say because very often there are negative

comments made either in the media or in meetings and we have to realize, as a lot of us should, that Nova Scotia is one of the leading provinces in trying to stop family violence. My second point as far as perpetrators are concerned is that those of the men who do it are victims of child abuse. I think we very often have to realize where they are coming from. What they are into now and that even though we might separate a father from his family or we might try to do some bandaid work in transition houses, whatever happens; if that man does not receive help he will find another family to batter. I hope we will get a solution which will allow us to jointly coordinate a way of stopping the vicious circle. Thank you.

Speaker: Murray Manzer - Board Member, Lunenburg
Family and Children's Services

It has been pointed out by several speakers this afternoon that there are problems within the social assistance program in Nova Scotia. I do not think anyone has pointed out that there are a great many families including a great many children who depend solely upon the social assistance program for their support. I feel it is something that should be mentioned at a Conference on the Family. Many of the problems which are dealt with by courts, by Family and Children's Services, and Children's Aid Societies, such as violence in the family, and many of the services we are talking about stem from the fact that there may many families who do not have adequate assistance in order to live. It is one of the things that not only the government, but our whole population should be seriously considering - what are we doing for these families and the children who are growing up in them. Thank you.

Speaker: Rosemary Currie - Director of Social Services
Municipal Program in Cumberland County and Town of Parrsboro

I sit as a Regional Director on the Municipal Social Services Association and I entirely agree with the last couple of speakers on the rates and the amounts of money that are given at the discretion of our

66 municipal units across the Province of Nova Scotia. I think we do have to take some responsibility, the elected and appointed officials of these 66 municipal units, and possibly with the assistance of our Honourable Edmund Morris' mandate certain areas of responsibility. We mandated the \$79 comfort allowance to all the people in the Homes for Special Care and it is working very effectively. I say we mandate the food and other areas to be earmarked in coordination with the municipal units and the Department of Social Services in Halifax to ensure that we do not remain part of the system perpetrating violence and abuse of our people in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Speaker: Trevor Williams - Executive Director of
Family Service Canada

Two years ago when we brought our national conference to Sydney, Nova Scotia, hosted by Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia, the Minister and the Premier came to the conference. We had no concept at that point of where this might lead when as we sat at the head table and we heard this very proud announcement that the Province of Nova Scotia was going to undertake a Task Force and eventually end with a Conference on the Family to be held this year. When we look back, and I was very pleased to be invited to attend, I suppose the thing that impresses me the most because I grew up in another part of the country, is the incredible skills and incredible sincerity that exists here amongst the people. I have sat through two days of people who have honestly and openly expressed fears, frustrations, nervousness, anxiety, some joy, some terror and some anger. At no time did I ever feel that what I was saying was not being heard and I think we had a Prime Minister once who captured this while talking about relationships with the Americans. He said sometimes we find ourselves in a different boat, sometimes we find ourselves rowing in different directions, sometimes we find ourselves moving at different speeds, but regardless of that, no matter where we go we continually find ourselves in the same ocean. I think what I am trying to say in a very proud way, really, is that you will not come to a definition of the family today, you will not seek a perspective on how

you will look at policy by this evening, you will not by the time we all manage to escape tomorrow morning, have discovered all of the causes of all the ills that you have, but I am going to leave here tomorrow morning knowing that sincerely there are a group of people here working as hard as they can, caring as much as they can, for the people of Nova Scotia. I think that is what brings you together, that is what ties you together. I do not want to see you lose it and do not ever give up the spirit and keep fighting. Trust in the Minister and his sincerity and if he gets out of line go after him a bit. He is brave. He can handle himself. Keep up the spirit. Keep working for the family. Do not forget all the important parts that go to make up the family. Do not lose sight of where you are trying to go because whether you are in the voluntary sector or the government sector, whether you have set yourself a mammoth task, I think you have sincerely opened up an enormous amount of work in this country which I personally hope that I can take from province to province and begin to bring forward the concept that Nova Scotia was the first province to take the big step towards developing a concept of the primacy of families as an important unit of caring, of education, of cultural maintenance and of warmth and security for all its members who hold an equal value in society. I want to thank you for your time and your effort.

Speaker: His Honour, Judge Vernon MacDonald -
Family Court of Nova Scotia

I think on behalf of the Judges here who you now know are human, I would like to express our thanks for the invitation. We, I think, are all very pleased to be here and to let you know as I am sure alot of you do know, that we share many of the concerns that are set out in the Task Force Report. We were very pleased to have the opportunity to learn from the groups we attended, to share with you all some of our ideas and generally to contribute to the overall success that hopefully will flow from this exercise. Already you have heard Judge Williams refer to some concerns that he had and I would just like to highlight some other concerns that will go a long way to make our

duties that much easier to discharge in the community. Some of these I know that you are well aware of all ready. In particular, there is a great need for facilities for adolescents who do come in conflict with the law. That was something that was addressed in some of the workshops I attended and, as well, is addressed in the Task Force Report. The other thing, as Judge Williams has referred to already, is the provision of community counselling services to assist families in need. That is something I know the Minister was aware of. I have had other discussions with him and it is something that has already been referred to here today. I can only hope that something will be done to ensure that that is carried out throughout this great province. We have to ensure that people who do need these services can have access to them, especially so in relation to the court. The court cannot work in isolation. It needs support services for the people that come to it with difficulties. The other thing is upgrading of Family Benefits. We deal with the maintenance and the question of support on a daily basis. I leave you these items. I am sure that they are all of great concern to you, but again on behalf of the Judges I would thank you very much for allowing us to be here. We are concerned and we hope that you all now know because we are here we share the same concerns you do. Thanks very much.

Father MacKinnon - Has everyone who wishes to speak had an opportunity to do so? I think if there is no one else I will ask David or Bessie if they have anything to add by way of conclusion.

David - There are several points that did not come out very strongly this afternoon. I want to take just a minute to refer to them. In one of the sessions the point was raised that even as we are talking about family we are referring to a Division which is Family and Children's Services and maybe as we go from sessions today there is a little better understanding that families and children are not separated, it is families and family service that we are talking about. As several people mentioned this afternoon we need to be much more aware of the situation within families and sympathetic to the relationships that are there. Children are not separate, but in our province for many years

we have been concerned for protection of children. Perhaps we are looking now more at the preservation of family relationships when they should be preserved. Secondly, there is a system within and a system without. I made mention earlier that those of us who are outside of the department and some of us who are outside the day-to-day working of agencies have a role to play in the larger society. I know from talking with many people that it is easy to become bogged down in day-by-day concerns and perhaps some of us have a role to play in bringing a sense of optimism back into the system from time to time. I want to continue to do that and I hope that people see me as one of the people who does that. Thirdly and lastly, we did not mention to any extent this afternoon the cultural preservation which is a very strong need within our Province. In Canada we are not one group, although we are all Canadians, in Nova Scotia we are not all one group although we are all Nova Scotians. Some among us have made the point very strongly through these two days that there is the need to recognize that in some parts of our Province there is a French speaking population and other parts of our province there is a Micmac population. In places widely scattered, there is a black population and these three groups have recognition in our province and service needs.

When the Task Force did its work we were aware that there were groups that wished to be recognized in addition to the uniformity of service that we offer and we call for across the province. There is always the danger when we highlight differences that we take away from the similarities. I want to assure you on behalf of the Task Force that we did not overlook the differences which we feel are important and the question was raised of why we did not make recommendations in this regard. What we hope will continue to happen is when circumstances allow and circumstances are appropriate, that the groups that require attention will receive it and that in those parts of the province where the speaking of French language is important that there will be members on staff in various departments as well as Social Services who will be able to give assistance to those people who need it, particularly in times of difficulty. We did not overlook that, but we heard from those agencies the desire to increase the number of people

who can provide the service every day, all day, regardless of the hour. It is not always possible to make that kind of change when there are people on staff who need to stay on staff. It is when others join that the change may occur. Thank you very much for the questions that were raised this afternoon. We appreciate the opportunity of being able to respond to some of them and certainly appreciate the good wishes that you have brought this afternoon.

Bessie - I want to thank you very much for coming and for participating. When the Task Force began we knew there would be a Conference on the Family, but we had very little idea of the style or the form that conference would take. I think that from my point of view and I hope from the point of view of all of you who are gathered here, it has been a very successful get-together and that we really, as Trevor Williams said in his statement, have set a tone for the future. So, from me to you, thank you very much.

Father MacKinnon - I just wanted to bring these proceedings to a close by again thanking the Minister, the Honourable Edmund Morris, for conceiving of the idea of the Task Force and the conference and for seeing it through. I wanted to thank also the members of the Task Force, they are listed on page 218 of the report. We and all Nova Scotians I think owe them a great debt. They have done a great service to the families of Nova Scotia and consequently the whole of the province. I want to thank also, in a very special way, the planning committee who brought this Conference off. Bill Grestorex is the Chair of this Committee and he has worked tirelessly. Mike Craig, Arnold Jones, Martha Crowe, Rosemary Rippon, Bessie Harris, Cyril Reddy, George Borden, the Secretariat, Debra Gannon and Gail Gilhen and the press/media coordinator, Anne Woods. Finally, I want to say a very special word of thanks to the Telephone Pioneers of America for the installation of the loop systems for the hearing impaired in this lecture hall today and in the McKay Room of Bloomfield Centre for our banquet tonight. Very special thanks to them and thank you all, everyone of you, for your participation, for your spirit and for the great interest you have shown in this important subject. Meeting is adjourned.

PLENARY SESSION - TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 1987



FATHER GREGORY MACKINNON
CHIEF RAPPORTEUR

PLENARY SESSION - TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 1987



FATHER MACKINNON
and
DELEGATES



PANEL
and
DELEGATES

CLOSING ADDRESS

**The Honourable John M. Buchanan
Premier of Nova Scotia**

NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY

CLOSING ADDRESS

THE HONOURABLE JOHN M. BUCHANAN

PREMIER OF NOVA SCOTIA

Tuesday, June 23, 1987

I am delighted to be with you tonight and I want to begin by giving my congratulations to all of those who helped organize the Conference and to those of you who have participated in its discussions.

I congratulate the Minister of Social Services, Mr. Morris, and Mr. Greatorex, Administrator of Family and Children's Services in the Department of Social Services, who has been the Chair of this Conference.

Special congratulations are in order to Dr. David Stevenson and Bessie Harris, the Co-Chairs of the Task Force on Family and Children's Services, which formed the discussion background for this Conference. I also congratulate your Chief Rapporteur, Father Greg MacKinnon.

Your deliberations indicate clearly to me that Dr. Stevenson, Miss Harris and their colleagues on the Task Force on Family and Children's Services had their priorities right in their report. My job as Premier now is to lead our government in building on the foundation of that report and of this Conference, to heighten our Province's commitment to the concept of the family as an essential part of Nova Scotia's social fabric.

This involves more public measures to increase public awareness of the family and the family issues and it involves family service enhancement.

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss with you some of the ways in which our government is determined to work with Nova Scotians to build upon a unique set of values.

All of our programs for people must be developed in the spirit of fairness and with the goal of building a better future for our people.

This spirit of fairness must underlie our programs for meeting the needs of Nova Scotian families. This spirit of fairness must be central to how we deal with single and working parents, to how we meet the social requirements of the baby boom generation.

Our standard of living and our social safety net must not be taken for granted. We must develop ways to improve them and to ensure their continuing relevance.

In order to ensure that our family programs meet contemporary family needs we must ensure a competitive economy that will generate the revenue that will make it possible to meet changing family needs. Our government is dedicated to working with concerned Nova Scotians to develop and implement the programs to meet the identified needs. We call this partnership for progress.

Edmund has already accepted, at the opening of your Conference, the very important first recommendation of the Task Force, a "POLICY ON THE FAMILY WHICH CLEARLY EXPRESSES COMMITMENT TO THE CONCEPT OF THE FAMILY AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF NOVA SCOTIA AND THEREFORE WORTHY OF GOVERNMENT ACTION AND SUPPORT."

Let me address several other directions from your Conference which Father MacKinnon, Edmund and others have described to me from your plenary meeting this afternoon and from the discussions of your Conference. We will certainly consider the proceedings most carefully in Policy Board and Cabinet, but I can immediately say that many of the themes of your Conference we accept:

The fact that you have expressed at your Conference very wide support for the Task Force Report.

The need to reduce present staff workloads, to assure appropriate staffing levels, and to provide continuous training and retraining.

The importance of prevention and early intervention.

Strong endorsement of Foster Parents as a primary response to children who cannot remain with their own families.

The recognition that we have in Nova Scotia, very many fine family support and children's services programs in place, but that there is a need for more and better coordination, provincially and locally, and support for multi-disciplinary approaches.

In response to another recommendation of the Task Force, we will provide funding support immediately for a pilot project in early intervention to help us develop guidelines for such programs throughout the Province, and the Department of Social Services will try to expand funding support elsewhere commencing next year.

The Department will also commence, in October this year, financial support for a continuing child services worker in each present and prospective transition house in the Province, and is preparing a job description for a Coordinator of Services to Adolescents and Residential Facilities, which the Task Force ranked fourth among its 65 Recommendations.

Your Conference we think has properly and wisely reminded us that in the planning and delivery of Family and Children's Services we must always be attentive to the variety of cultural backgrounds in Nova Scotia.

The Department of Social Services is involved in detailed negotiations with the Federal Government for what we hope will be

significant increases in Child Care Services in Nova Scotia. As part of these negotiations, very helpful consultations have taken place with representatives of Day Care in the Province. Earlier this month, Edmund chaired this year's meeting of Provincial and Territorial Ministers from across Canada, and he tells me that the Federal Minister has confirmed that he will meet with them in the next thirty days and that a new federal initiative in child care is imminent.

We recognize, too, that these and the many other comments and views that you have expressed at your Conference, will require legislative change. All of the recommendations of the Task Force in that regard are indeed under consideration.

Several delegates said at your plenary meeting this afternoon that this has been the best Conference they have ever attended, and I have heard only positive comments from you tonight.

Nova Scotians are our Province's greatest resource. And family life is the basis on which that resource is developed.

If we are to be successful in maintaining and enhancing the quality of family life in Nova Scotia, we must build on all our strengths. Without economic success there will not be family success.

But the reverse is also true. Without successful family development there will not be economic success.

I thank you all for your positive participation in the Conference. Our Province is stronger because of your leadership, in your communities, for the betterment of Nova Scotian families.

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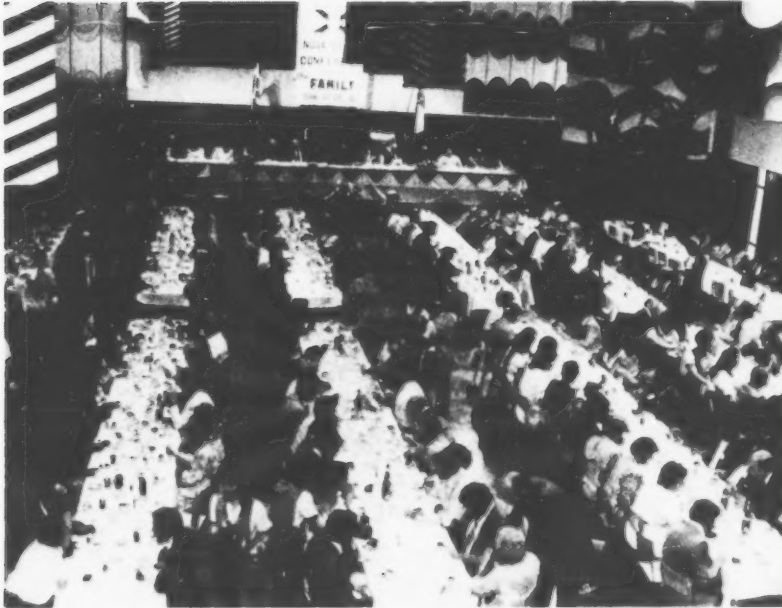
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CLOSING BANQUET - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 1987



HONOURABLE JOHN BUCHANAN
PREMIER OF NOVA SCOTIA
ADDRESSING CONFERENCE DELEGATES

CLOSING BANQUET - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 1987



VIEW OF
DELEGATES
ATTENDING
BANQUET

HONOURABLE
JOHN BUCHANAN
and
HONOURABLE
EDMUND
MORRIS



APPENDIX "A"

TASK FORCE ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN
ORDER OF PRIORITY**



TASK FORCE ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

Throughout this report the Task Force has made sixty-five recommendations for change. Each of the recommendations is important and was considered a priority by many of the people who spoke with the Task Force or forwarded briefs and letters. Although the Task Force is of the opinion that all the recommendations have merit and warrant immediate attention, it was decided to put the recommendations in priority order, and has sought to accomplish this while doing justice to all of them. The ten recommendations that the Task Force considers most important have been arranged in order of priority. The remaining recommendations have been prioritized under the title of the chapter in which they are contained. The numbers in brackets at the end of each recommendation provide the chapter number and order in which the recommendation is listed in the chapter.

TEN RECOMMENDATIONS OF OVERALL PRIORITY

1. that the Minister urge the government to develop and implement a policy on the family which clearly expresses its commitment to the concept of the family as an essential part of the social fabric of Nova Scotia and, therefore, worthy of government action and support. (1.1)
2. that the Minister
 - (a) strengthen and enhance the HESS Committee structure to provide for the overall co-ordination, at the provincial and regional levels, of family policy and programs and services to children and families; or
 - (b) develop an alternate mechanism at the provincial and regional levels for the co-ordination of family policy, programs and services to children and families. (2.1)
3. that average caseload sizes be reduced to 30 within a three-year period, beginning in 1988-89, with particular attention to child protection. (11.8)

4. that a position of Co-ordinator of Services to Adolescents and Residential Facilities be established at a senior level in the Family and Children's Services Division of the Department of Social Services. (9.2)
5. that the Departments of Social Services and Health jointly establish and operate three regionally-based crisis/assessment centres for adolescents and other children in care. (9.3)
6. that agencies and the Department of Social Services strengthen the foster care system by establishing additional and alternate support options for children in care and for foster parents, including specialized foster homes, networks of foster homes, and facilities and programs designed to prepare adolescents for independent living. (7.2)
7. that
 - (a) a co-ordinated response to child neglect and abuse be developed through the establishment of a standard provincial protocol for all agencies and professionals involved in the provision of services to children; and
 - (b) the protocol be supported through inter-disciplinary training sessions. (6.2)
8. that
 - (a) funding be initiated for early intervention programs; and
 - (b) province-wide standards and guidelines be established for their operation. (4.1)
9. that
 - (a) day care services for children be more flexible in meeting family needs, including respite care, shift work, part-time work, after-school care, and family crisis; and,

- (b) more subsidized day care be developed for all children in high risk situations who live in areas of the province where there are currently waiting lists. (3.6)

10. that

- (a) the personnel and monetary resources of the Staff Training Section of the Department of Social Services be increased;
- (b) a comprehensive staff training program be developed for Family and Children's Services, with a goal of implementation during the 1987-88 fiscal year; and
- (c) the Department of Social Services utilize resources such as the Maritime School of Social Work at Dalhousie University, other universities, and the Departments of Health and Education to assist with staff training endeavors. (11.12)

REMAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been listed in order of priority within each chapter of the Task Force report. No sequencing of chapters in order of priority has been undertaken, thus they appear as they are found in the report.

SERVICES TO FAMILIES

1. that

- (a) teaching homemaker services be funded as part of the core budgets of family and children's services agencies; and
- (b) family and children's services agencies currently offering homemaker programs be assisted to expand these programs. (3.5)

2. that the Departments of Social Services and Education be mandated to work co-operatively toward the implementation of an effective and uniformly available Family Life Education Program within the public education system. (3.1)

3. that, as part of their responsibilities in communities throughout Nova Scotia, agencies be encouraged to provide support for groups designed to assist adults in improving the quality of their family and marital relationships and enhancing their parenting skills. (3.2)
4. that changes be undertaken to ensure that the Family Benefits and Municipal Social Assistance programs are more responsive to family needs and better able to provide sufficient income to meet those needs. (3.7)
5. that counselling services be recognized as essential services, funded by government, and be made available throughout Nova Scotia in co-operation with existing family and children's services agencies and organizations. (3.4)
6. that the Department of Social Services develop and implement a plan for the use of a variety of public information methodologies, particularly multi-media campaigns, to communicate supportive messages on family life. (3.3)
7. that the Minister of Social Services implement an assignment of maintenance program for recipients of Family Benefits, and ensure appropriate enforcement of the assigned orders. (3.9)
8. that Family Benefits and Municipal Social Assistance allowances for shelter costs more accurately reflect the cost of shelter, particularly in urban areas of the province. (3.8)
9. that the Chief Judge of the Family Court be allocated sufficient funds to conduct and enhance the current professional development sessions for the Family Court Judiciary, and that those sessions include an examination of the Court's role in dealing with family crisis, and a study of the trends and social conditions of the time. (3.10)

SERVICES TO HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

1. that the Department of Social Services undertake the expansion of in-home support programs for handicapped children. (4.2)
2. that all services and facilities for mentally handicapped children become part of the Family and Children's Services Division of the Department of Social Services. (4.3)

FAMILY VIOLENCE

1. that the budget of each transition house be adjusted to include one full-time child care worker. (5.2)
2. that a provincial protocol be developed for the guidance and use of all agencies involved in spousal abuse. (5.4)
3. that
 - (a) training be provided for staff of all services who work with victims of family violence;
 - (b) funding be provided for self-help and support programs for victims and perpetrators; and
 - (c) Courts use their existing powers to order treatment for perpetrators of assault and abuse. (5.1)
4. that provision be made for the funding of items of special need for victims of violence and their children in co-operation with the municipalities and transition houses. (5.3)

CHILD NEGLECT AND ABUSE

1. that the special-needs allocation for each agency be increased and that the funds be used, at the discretion of the agency head, to meet the needs of

children and their families, regardless of whether or not the children who are being served are in the care of the agency. (6.3)

2. that treatment services for child victims, family members and perpetrators of child neglect and abuse be made available throughout the province and that agencies be provided with the necessary funds to gain access to these services. (6.4)
3. that a liaison be established with the Nova Scotia Medical Society to assist with the development of a team approach to respond to the medical aspects of child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, and with training staff of Family and Children's Services. (6.1)

FOSTER CARE

1. that agencies be required to implement permanency planning on behalf of the children in their care. (7.1)
2. that an aggressive recruitment/assessment program to find foster parents be developed and implemented in conjunction with the Federation of Foster Parent Associations of Nova Scotia. (7.3)
3. that, in order to retain and obtain foster parents,
 - (a) uniform and mandatory orientation and training programs be developed for foster parents, in conjunction with the Federation of Foster Parent Associations of Nova Scotia; and,
 - (b) the necessary resources be provided to allow the attendance of foster parents at training sessions. (7.4)
4. that the maintenance rate for older children be adjusted upward to reflect the increased demands placed on foster parents, related to the care of older children. (7.5)

5. that a classification system and program of special foster care rates be developed and implemented for children with special needs. (7.6)
6. that efforts be made to obtain standard comprehensive insurance coverage for foster parents. (7.7)

ADOPTION

1. that uniform standards be developed and enforced for all aspects of adoption services, including assessments, placements, adoption home studies, and eligibility requirements. (8.2)
2. that the subsidized adoption program be expanded, and provincial support be reinstated at one hundred percent. (8.3)
3. that the legislation relating to non-relative, third-party adoptions be amended to provide for approval by the agency of the prospective adoptive couple before the placement of the child in their home. (8.8)
4. that
 - (a) a centralized adoption agency or service operated by the Department of Social Services, with service delivery provided through regionally-based adoption units, be established; and
 - (b) a province-wide Register of approved adoptive parents and of children available for adoption be established and administered by the Department of Social Services. (8.1)
5. that policies be developed which create an awareness and an understanding of the range of options available in the adoption process, and which allow for more openness immediately in two types of adoptions:
 - (a) those of older children; and
 - (b) in adoptions in which birth mothers are provided with the opportunity to be part of the selection process by reviewing non-identifying but pertinent information on two or three suitable adoptive homes and indicating a preference. (8.5)

6. that post-adoptive services be designed in an effort to ensure a comprehensive adoption program. (8.4)
7. that the existence and the function of the Adoption Register be publicized. (8.6)
8. that the Department of Social Services review current practices related to private adoptions with relatives, particularly the role of agencies. (8.7)
9. that the Department of Social Services, in conjunction with the Departments of Health and the Attorney General, establish a multi-disciplinary committee to study the subject of surrogate parenting and make recommendations for policy development and/or legislation respecting this matter. (8.9)

SERVICES TO ADOLESCENTS

1. that contingent upon the provision of additional staff resources,
 - (a) the Children's Services Act be amended to allow a child between the ages of sixteen and eighteen inclusive to enter into a Voluntary Care Agreement with a children's services agency, without parental consent; and
 - (b) legislative authority be provided to establish a mechanism for parents to challenge such an agreement, and in the absence of a court challenge, the child would be presumed to be competent to enter into the agreement for services. (9.1)

RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

1. that the child care facilities system be restructured so that the purpose role, function, and relationship of each facility to the others within the system is clearly defined. (10.1)
2. that along with other enhancements to the Nova Scotia Residential Centre, a small, but well-staffed and highly-structured, specialized treatment unit be established. (10.2)

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

1. that the staff-child ratios in child caring facilities be enhanced to range from 1:3 to 1:8, depending on the nature of the facility and the children being served. (11.9)
2. that
 - (a) licensed children's services facilities be funded at a level that will ensure that adequate standards are in place in each of the facilities;
and
 - (b) a reserve of funds be established within the Department of Social Services to meet the special-needs requirements of children who are placed in facilities. The reserve funds should be used for requirements over and above the normal operation of the facility - e.g., special one-to-one child care arrangements, the purchase of special psychological services or remedial educational help. (11.16)
3. that for the larger joint service agencies, there be a Senior Administrator, in addition to the Executive Director, responsible for the day-to-day operation of the agency. (11.3)
4. that a position of Co-ordinator of Adoption Services be established in the Family and Children's Services Division. (11.6)

5. that a single per capita rate of municipal contribution towards the cost of providing children's services be established to reflect current total municipal expenditures in this area, and be subject to an annual cost of living revision by the Executive Council. (11.15)
6. that the Department of Social Services and the Nova Scotia Civil Service Commission set the entry level qualification in children's services at
 - (a) the B.S.W. level, or beyond, for field offices and agencies; and
 - (b) the community college level certificate in child care, or beyond, for counsellors in residential facilities;

with the exception of those jobs which are viewed as providing support staff to work with professional staff. (11.10)

7. that the position classifications and salary scales for (a) managerial and supervisory personnel, and (b) child protection staff be upgraded to adequately reflect job responsibilities. (11.11)
8. that a budget review committee composed of a Chairperson, two representatives from the agencies and two from the Department of Social Services, be established to:
 - (a) review the Projected Operational Plans of agencies;
 - (b) meet with agencies on a regular basis to discuss their program and service priorities; and
 - (c) make recommendations to the Minister on the overall priorities for funding, staffing and programming for the agencies. (11.13)
9. that training modules be developed for agency boards. (11.2)
10. that the Family and Children's Services Division be reorganized and enhanced with additional staff to strengthen its ability to administer and

evaluate the programs, services, agencies, and facilities for which it is responsible. (11.7)

11. that the Regional Administrators be relieved of their responsibilities for direct individual agency/office management and that their responsibilities for the overall management of all services and programs in their respective regions be increased. (11.5)
12. that expansion within the family and children's services sector in Nova Scotia be restricted to community-based, non-profit agencies. (11.1)
13. that
 - (a) over a three-year period beginning in 1988, the matching formula be raised twenty-five cents each year until it reaches a dollar for each dollar raised privately by agencies; and
 - (b) the provincial matching funds be paid upon receipt of an agency's year-end statement of privately-raised funds and be subject to audit at a later date. (11.14)
14. that in each of the five district offices of the Department of Social Services responsible for children's services, advisory boards with a broad community representation be appointed. (11.4)

LEGISLATION

1. that
 - (a) access to the Child Abuse Register be broadened to provide for the screening of foster parents, prospective adoptive parents and persons employed in positions primarily relating to work with children;
 - (b) the definition of abuse be amended to include abuse caused by any person; and

- (c) the definition of abuse be amended to ensure that accidental injury to children is not registered on the Child Abuse Register. (12.5)
2. that legislation be enacted which provides the Court with statutory discretion to:
- (a) exclude the parents from the courtroom during the testimony of a child victim, with the parents' counsel remaining and permitted recesses during direct cross-examination to consult with his clients;
 - (b) utilize video-taped evidence;
 - (c) admit hearsay evidence of a child as proof of the contents thereof;
 - (d) make rules of Court concerning the receipt of children's evidence;
- if it is demonstrated to the Court to be in the best interests of the child to so proceed. (12.3)
3. that regulations be enacted to provide specifically for the manner in which the costs incurred by, and the fees of, the guardian ad litem are to be paid. (12.1)
4. that the frequency and types of usage of the guardian ad litem be monitored by the Department of Social Services. (12.2)
5. that Section 44 of the Children's Services Act and procedures thereunder, be amended to:
- (a) clarify the method of payment of legal fees where agencies hire counsel to present a matter to Court;
 - (b) clarify the particulars which must be included in the notice given to parents; and
 - (c) include parents and guardians as persons whom the Court may refer for psychiatric, medical or other examinations. (12.4)

APPENDIX "B"

WORKSHOP CHAIRPERSONS AND RAPPORTEURS

CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY
WORKSHOP CHAIRPERSONS AND RAPPORTEURS

WORKSHOP - FAMILY POLICY AND COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Chairperson(s)

Rev. Vincent Ihasz
Chairman - Nova Scotia Social
Services Council
Member: Panel on Foster
Care and Adoption

Mrs. Joyce Halpern
Executive Director
Family Service Association
of Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford
and Halifax County
Member: Panel on Services to Families

Rapporteur(s)

Mrs. Joan Glode
Executive Director,
MicMac Family and Children's
Services
Member: Panel on Services to
Families

Mrs. Sandra Arseneau (Alternate)
Member: Nova Scotia Social
Services Council

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WORKSHOP - SERVICES TO FAMILIES

Chairperson(s)

Helen E. "Betty" Gruchy
Chairperson - Panel on Services
to Families

Mrs. Debbi Forsyth-Smith
President
Advisory Council on the
Status of Women

Rapporteur(s)

Mrs. Barbara Hall
Member: Nova Scotia Social
Services Council

Reverend Bernard O'Neill
Member: Nova Scotia Social
Services Council

WORKSHOP - SERVICES TO HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Chairperson(s)

Mary Lou Clarke
Member: Social Services
Council
Member: Panel on Services
to Families

Mr. John Walker (Alternate)
Superintendent
N.S. Youth Training Centre

Rapporteur(s)

Joyce Ross
Director, East Preston Day
Care Centre

Ted Muggah (Alternate)
Member: N.S. Social Services
Council

* * *

WORKSHOP - FAMILY VIOLENCE

Chairperson(s)

Mary Cooley, Chairperson
Services for Sexual Assault
Victims
Member: Panel on Child Abuse
and Family Violence

Norma Profitt
Executive Director
Bryony House

Rapporteur(s)

Richard Seigny
Executive Director
Family Services of Eastern
Nova Scotia
Member: Panel on Services to
Families

Debra Burris, Co-ordinator
Child Abuse Register
Member: Panel on Child Abuse
and Family Violence

* * *

WORKSHOP - CHILD ABUSE

Chairperson(s)

Dr. John Anderson
IWK Hospital for Children
Halifax
Member: Panel on Child Abuse
and Family Violence

Ms. Barb MacPherson
Protection Worker
Children's Aid Society
of Halifax

Rapporteur(s)

Ms. Sharon Irwin
Director, Town Day Care
Centre, Glace Bay
Cape Breton

Mr. John Campbell
Probation Officer
Family Court, Dartmouth
Member: Panel on Child Abuse
and Family Violence

WORKSHOP - FOSTER CARE

Chairperson(s)

Mrs. Pauline Johnson, B.S.W.
M.S.W., Executive Director
Federation of Foster Parents
Association of Nova Scotia

Mrs. Maureen Carew (Alternate)
Foster Home Finder
Department of Social Services
District Office, Dartmouth
Member: Panel on Foster Care
and Adoption

Rapporteur(s)

Mr. Norman Stubbington
President
Federation of Foster Parents
Association of Nova Scotia

Alternate served as Rapporteur
for Services to Adolescents

* * *

WORKSHOP - ADOPTION

Chairperson(s)

Marilyn Peers, Ex. Director
Children's Aid Society of
Halifax

Jennifer Dhalla, President (Alternate)
Family and Children's Services
of Lunenburg County
Member: Panel on Foster Care and
Adoption

Rapporteur(s)

Lesley Reid
Casework Supervisor
Family and Children's Services
of Cumberland County
Member: Panel on Foster Care
and Adoption

Dan Johnson (Alternate)
Former Administrator of Family
and Children's Services
Member: N.S. Social Services
Council

* * *

WORKSHOP - SERVICES TO ADOLESCENTS

Chairperson(s)

Mrs. Helen Blau
Chairperson: Panel on Child
Abuse and Family Violence

Mr. Alex Bruce
Member: Panel on Adolescent
Services and Residential
Facilities

Rapporteur(s)

Mrs. Maizie Archibald
Member: Nova Scotia Social
Services Council

Mr. Bill McCarron
Coordinator
Services to the Mentally
Handicapped
Member: Panel on Adoption and
Foster Care

* * *

WORKSHOP - RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Chairperson(s)

Mr. Frank Capstick
Assistant Regional Administrator
Sydney Regional Office

Mr. Brian Amirault (Alternate)
Director
Residential Centre
Hebron, Yarmouth

Rapporteur(s)

Mr. Ross Thorpe
Director - Services
for the Mentally Handicapped
Member: Panel on Adolescent
Services and Residential
Facilities

Mrs. Marilyn Brookes (Alternate)
Assistant Superintendent
Nova Scotia Residential Centre
Member: Panel on Adolescent
Services and Residential
Facilities

* * *

WORKSHOP - ADMINISTRATION

Chairperson(s)

Elsie Blake
Executive Director
N.S. Family & Child Welfare
Association
Chairman: Panel on Program
Administration

Chairperson(s)

Paul Green (Alternate)
Assistant Director
Department of Social Services
City of Dartmouth
Member: Panel on Administration

Rapporteur(s)

Joan MacKinnon
Regional Administrator
Department of Social Services
Member: Panel on Program
Administration

Rapporteur(s)

Harvey MacArthur (Alternate)
Executive Director
Children's Aid Society and
Family Services of Colchester
Co.

* * *

WORKSHOP - LEGISLATION

Chairperson(s)

Judge R. James Williams
Judge of the Family Court
Province of Nova Scotia
Chairperson: Panel on
Legislation

Rapporteur(s)

Trevor Townsend
Director of Family and
Children's Services
Department of Social Services
Member: Panel on Legislation

WORKSHOP - LEGISLATION cont'd

Darrell Pink, Solicitor (Alternate)
Patterson Kitz
Member: Panel on Legislation

Martha Crowe (Alternate)
Administrative Officer
Department of Social Services
Member: Panel on Legislation

* * *

APPENDIX "C"

**QUESTIONS/CONCERNS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
IN THE
NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY**

NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY
QUESTIONS/CONCERNS FOR THE
CONSIDERATION OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

1. **Main recommendation of Workshop.**
2. **How should Government implement this recommendation, taking into consideration the current system's ability to deal with it?**
3. **Are the recommendations of the Task Force in this Chapter of the Report appropriate?**
4. **Are there recommendations not made which should be made?**
5. **If recommendations of the Task Force made in the relevant Chapter of the Task Force Report are also contained in the top ten recommendations, is the prioritization appropriate?**

If no, please explain and indicate the priority position(s) the Workshop would recommend.

6. **If recommendations in the relevant Chapter of the Task Force Report are not in the top ten recommendations, should some or all of them be in the top ten?**

APPENDIX "D"

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY
JUNE 21 - 23, 1987**

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY
SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY
ANTIGONISH, NOVA SCOTIA
JUNE 21, 22 and 23, 1987

HOST AND PARTICIPANT:
HONOURABLE EDMUND L. MORRIS, MINISTER OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr. Brian Amirault
Hebron Residential Centre
Hebron, Yarmouth Co., N. S.
BOW 1X0

Ms. Paulette Arsenault
Children's Aid Society of Pictou County
43 Pine Street
New Glasgow, N. S.
BOK 1S0

Dr. John Anderson
Izaak Walton Killam Hospital
for Children
P. O. Box 3070
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 3G9

Ms. Sandra Arseneau
Nova Scotia Social Services Council
28 Winston Avenue
Amherst, N. S.
B4H 1K5

Ms. Dorothy Archibald
Interdepartment Committee on
the Status of Women
Rep. to Committee on Family
Violence
c/o Department of Health
P. O. Box 488
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2R8

Mr. Michael Arthur
Progress Center for Early Intervention
2 Springvale Avenue
Halifax, N. S.
B3N 2A2

Ms. Maizie Archibald
Nova Scotia Social Services
Council
P. O. Box 1032
Truro, N. S.
B2N 5G9

Mr. Reg Atkins
Residential Centre Hebron
P. O. Box 95
Hebron, Yarmouth Co., N. S.
BOW 1X0

Mr. Andy Arsenault
Cape Breton Hospital
P. O. Box 515
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 6H4

Ms. Margaret Anne Aucoin
Children's Aid Society and Family Ser-
vices of Colchester County
P. O. Box 950
Truro, N. S.
B2N 5G7

Ms. Verna Baker
Nova Scotia Social Services
Council
R. R. #5, P. O. Box 2688
Yarmouth, N. S.
B5A 4A9

Mrs. Grace Beuree
Department of Education
13 Overdale Lane
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 3V2

Ms. Eileen Barteaux
Halifax YMCA
1565 South Park Street
P. O. Box 3024
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 3H1

Mrs. Elizabeth Bissett-Sagar
Social Work Department
Grace Maternity Hospital
5821 University Avenue
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 1W3

Ms. Doreen Beaton
Children's Aid Society of
Inverness-Richmond
P. O. Box 438
Port Hawkesbury, N. S.
BOE 2V0

Ms. Elsie Blake
Nova Scotia Family and Child
Welfare Association
Suite 3, 1574 Argyle Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2B2

Ms. Joyce Beaudry
Sackville Family Day Care
Association
70 Memory Lane
Lower Sackville, N. S.
B4C 2J3

Mrs. Helen Blau
336 Main Street
Yarmouth, N. S.
B5A 4A7

Ms. Debra Bellefontaine
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 2210
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 3C4

Mr. George Borden
Executive Assistant to the Minister
Department of Social Services
1 Florence Avenue
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 2A4

Ms. Donna Berlin
Southwest Nova Scotia Transi-
tion House Association
P. O. Box 580
Yarmouth, N. S.
B5A 4B4

Mr. Frederick (Sandy) Bowes
Department of Social Services
360 Prince Street, Suite 7
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 5L1

Ms. Sherleen Bernard
Nova Scotia Home for Colored
Children
1018 Main Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 4X9

Ms. Gail A. Bowes
Windsor Day Care Centre
R.R. #2, Centreville
Kings County, N. S.
B0P 1J0

Mr. Henry Bourgeois
Municipality of Kings County
87 Cornwallis Street
Kentville, N. S.
B4N 3W3

Mr. Lubin Bourque
Family and Children's Services
of Hants County
P. O. Box 96
Falmouth, N.S.
B0P 1L0

Rev. Vernon Boutilier
Antigonish Diocesan Charities
69 Kings Road
Sydney, N. S.
B1S 1A2

Ms. Janet Bowers
South Shore Transition House
Association
P. O. Box 9
Broad Cove, Lunenburg Co., N.S.
B0J 2H0

Ms. Janet Bray
Children's Training Centre -
Dartmouth
270 Pleasant Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 3S3

Sister Judith Breen
Home of the Guardian Angel
6345 Coburg Road
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 2A4

Mrs. Marilyn Brookes
Nova Scotia Residential Centre
P. O. Box 826
Truro, N. S.
B2N 5G6

Mr. David R. I. Brown
Children's Aid Society of
Cape Breton (Group Home)
14 View Street
North Sydney, N. S.
B2A 1E8

Mrs. Marilyn Brown
Children's Aid Society and Family
Services of Colchester County
11 Adelaide Street
Truro, N. S.
B2N 4W6

Mr. Stewart Brown
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2T7

Mr. Alex Bruce
President, Children's Aid Society
of Halifax
67 Deerbrook Drive
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2V 1X2

Mr. Gerard Thomas Bruno
Cape Breton County Foster
Parent Association
8 Hinesdale Drive
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 4K6

Mr. Calvin Bungay
Family Court of Nova Scotia
71 Topsail Blvd.
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 4G1

Sister Mary Jean Burns
Home of the Guardian Angel
6345 Coburg Road
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 2A4

Ms. Debra Burris
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2T7

Ms. Betty Campbell
Inverness County Homemaker Services
P. O. Box 179
Port Hood, Inverness Co., N. S.
BOS 1A0

Ms. Judy Burrows
Family and Children's Services
of Hants County
P. O. Box 99
Windsor, N. S.
BOH 1N0

Ms. Dawn Campbell
Annapolis Royal Town Council
41 Church Street
Annapolis Royal, N. S.
BOS 1A0

Mr. Kelley Byard
Nova Scotia Family and Child
Welfare Association
502 Robie Street
Truro, N. S.
B2N 1M5

Mr. John Campbell
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 1253
45 Alderney Drive
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 4B9

Mr. Claude Cajolais
Family and Children's Services
of Hants County
Comp. 38, Site 11
R. R. #2
Mount Uniacke, N. S.
BON 1Z0

Mr. William Campbell
Department of Social Services
12 Gourok Avenue
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2X 2B2

Mrs. Jacqueline Cajolais
Federation of Foster Parent
Associations of Nova
Scotia
Comp. 38, Site 11
R. R. #2
Mount Uniacke, N. S.
BON 1Z0

Mr. Frank Capstick
Department of Social Services
84 Connaught Avenue
Glace Bay, N. S.
B1A 5S2

Mr. John Caldwell
Halifax Co. - Bedford District
School Board
946 Main Street
Westphal, Halifax Co., N. S.
B2W 3V3

Ms. Maureen Carew
Department of Social Services
35 Belvedere Avenue
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2X 2N3

Dr. Ivan Carter
Izaak Walton Killam Hospital
for Children
5850 University Avenue
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 3G9

Ms. Kathy Cochrane
Woodside Day Care
10 Kipling Drive
Lower Sackville, N. S.
B4C 2X9

Ms. Sara Carty
Antigonish Infant and Pre-School
Development Program
R. R. #4, Lanark
Antigonish County, N. S.
B2G 2L2

Mr. J. Charles Coleman
Boys Residential Centre, New Waterford
194 MacRae Avenue
Sydney River, N. S.
B1H 3Z3

Ms. Alice Chadwick
Association of Dartmouth
Directors - Day Care
P. O. Box 2715
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 4R4

Judge John D. Comeau
Family Court of Nova Scotia
P. O. Box 460
Yarmouth, N. S.
B5A 4B4

Mrs. Kaye Chandler
Family and Children's Services
of Queens County
R. R. #1
Liverpool, N. S.
B0T 1K0

Ms. Barbara Connors
Homemakers Bureau
5555 Young Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 1Z7

Mr. William Chisholm
Department of Social Services
24 Fairview Street
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2L7

Ms. Mary Cooley
Association for Victims of
Sexual Assault
5260 Green Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 1N7

Ms. Mary Clarke
Nova Scotia Social Services
Council
1350 Oxford Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 3Y8

Mr. Barry Costello
Family and Children's Services of
Kings County
1013 George Street
New Minas, N. S.
B4N 4E2

Ms. Nina Clarke
Children's Training Centre,
Pictou
P. O. Box 880
Pictou, N. S.
B0K 1H0

Mr. Mike Craig
Department of Social Services
89 Wildwood Blvd.
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 2L9

Mrs. Martha Crowe
Department of Social Services
11 Forest Road
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 2M4

Mr. Harold Crowell
Social Planning Department
City of Halifax
P. O. Box 1749
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 3A5

Ms. Iris Currie
Nova Scotia Society for
Autistic Children
F. O. Box 309
R. R. #1
Bras d'Or, N. S.
B0C 1B0

Captain E. Jane Currie
Salvation Army Parkdale House
47 Byng Avenue
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 5B9

Ms. Rosemary Currie
Municipality of Cumberland
County
P. O. Box 399
Amherst, N. S.
B4H 3Z5

Dr. Marie-Claire Declerck
Department of Psychiatry
St. Martha's Hospital
P. O. Box 1417
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2L7

Ms. Erica D'Eon
Military Family Support Centre
9 Iriquois Drive
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 1B3

Mr. Darryl DeViller
Family and Children's Services
of Yarmouth County
47 Huntington Street
Yarmouth, N. S.
B5A 2S2

Mrs. Jennifer Dhalla
P. O. Box 58
Lahave, Lunenburg Co., N. S.
B0R 1C0

Mr. Alfred Doucet
Department of Social Services
18 Dipper Crescent
Halifax, N. S.
B3M 1W7

Ms. Marilyn Doucet
L'association des Acadiennes de la
Nouvelle Ecosse
R. R. #1, Meteghan River
Digby County, N. S.
B0W 2L0

Ms. Barbara Doucette
Metro Service of Support
P. O. Box 2931 D.E.P.S.
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 4Y2

Ms. Donna Douglas
Children's Aid Society and Family
Services of Colchester County
P. O. Box 950
Truro, N. S.
B2N 5G7

Ms. Susan Drysdale
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2T7

Ms. Betty Dugas-LeBlanc
Adolescence Acadienne
Church Point
Digby County, N. S.
BOW 1M0

Ms. Vivian Farrell
Children's Aid Society of Pictou County
High Street
Pictou, N. S.
BOK 1H0

Mr. Hank Dunnewold
Municipality of the County
of Pictou
P. O. Box 910
10 Willow Street
Pictou, N. S.
BOK 1H0

Mr. Donald Feron
Halifax District School Board
(Special Services)
44 Kingston Crescent
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 2M2

Mr. Ronald Dunphy
Dartmouth School Board
1 Thompson Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 2X8

Ms. Debi Forsyth-Smith
Nova Scotia Advisory Council
Status of Women
P. O. Box 745
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 2T3

Ms. Laurie Edwards
Department of Vocational and
Technical Training
1701 Hollis Street
Founders Square
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 3B7

Mr. Ray Francis
Children's Training Centre, Digby
P. O. Box 658
Digby, N. S.
BOV 1A0

Mr. William Eifler
Tough Love - Dartmouth
13 Dempster Crescent
R. R. #1
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 3X7

Ms. Eleanor Fraser
Town of New Glasgow
517 Washington Street
New Glasgow, N. S.
B2H 3M8

Mr. John Embree
Department of Attorney General
P. O. Box 7
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2L6

Mr. Graeme Fraser
Department of Social Services
Cobequid Multi-Service Centre
70 Memory Lane
Lower Sackville, N. S.
B4C 2J3

Ms. Estella Ervin
Johnson House
518 Pleasant Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 1A4

Mr. Greg Gammon
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2T7

Ms. Debra Gannon
Department of Social Services
70 Sapphire Crescent
Lower Sackville, N. S.
B4C 2T9

Ms. Marla Gotfried
Family Services of Support Association
2156 Brunswick Street, Rm. 101
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 2Y8

Mr. Louis Gannon
YMCA Walnut Street Group Home
2020 Gottingen Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 3A9

Major David Goulding
Salvation Army Family Services
2016 Gottingen Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 2H9

Mrs. Gail Gilhen
Department of Social Services
Site 15, Box 45, R. R. #4
Armdale, N. S.
B3L 4J4

Sister Ellen Grant
Antigonish Diocesan Charities
69 King's Road
Sydney, Nova Scotia
B1S 1A2

Ms. Cheryl Gillette
CAMR
83 Portland Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 1H5

Mr. William Greatorex
Department of Social Services
45 Birchwood Terrace
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 3W4

Ms. Dorothy Gilson
Naomi Society for Women
in Crisis
116 Church Street
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2E4

Mr. Paul Greene
Dartmouth Social Services
8 Boutilier's Grove
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2X 2W1

Mrs. Joan Glode
MicMac Family and Child-
ren's Services
P. O. Box 179
Shubenacadie, N. S.
BON 2H0

Mrs. Helen (Betty) Gruchy
221 Pleasant Street
Truro, N. S.
B2N 3S7

Ms. Pamela Gosse
Family and Children's Services
of Hants County
P. O. Box 192
Windsor, N. S.
BON 2T0

Mr. Robert Haines
Department of Education
P. O. Box 578
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2S9

Mr. Robert Haley
Department of Social Services
77 Convoy Avenue
Halifax, N. S.
B3N 2P9

Mr. Raymond Harris
Children's Aid Society of Shelburne Co.
P. O. Box 9
Barrington, N. S.
BOW 1E0

Ms. Barbara F. Hall
Nova Scotia Scotial Services
Council
11 Hall's Road
Halifax, N. S.
B3P 1P4

Ms. Barbara Hayes
Naomi Society for Women in Crisis
R. R. #1, St. Andrews
Antigonish, N. S.
BOH 1X0

Ms. Joyce Halpern
Family Service Association of
Halifax/Dartmouth/Bedford/
Halifax County
5614 Fenwick Street, #106
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 1P9

Judge Robert Hebb
Family Court of Nova Scotia
P. O. Box 520
Lunenburg, N. S.
BOJ 2C0

Ms. Mary Hamblin
Planned Parenthood Nova Scotia
P. O. Box 1206, Halifax North
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 5H4

Mr. Clem Hennebury
Department of Social Services
26 Hershey Road
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 2H5

Mrs. Elizabeth (Betty) Hamilton
Family and Children's Services
of Kings County
P. O. Box 35
Cambridge, N. S.
BOP 1G0

Ms. Helen Holland
Halifax, Dartmouth & County Foster
Parent Society
3214 Glendale Road
Halifax, N. S.
B3L 3S3

Mr. Don Hardy
Town of Kentville
18 Selfridge Street
Kentville, N. S.
B4N 1S2

Mr. Wayne Hollett
Atlantic Child Guidance Centre
1464 Tower Road
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 4L4

Miss Bessie Harris
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2T7

Mr. Earle Hood
Town of Windsor
1665 King Street
Windsor, N. S.
BON 2T0

Mr. James Hood
Nova Scotia Social Services
Council
16 Pleasant Avenue
P. O. Box 222
Stellarton, N. S.
BOK 1S0

Mr. Dan Johnson
Nova Scotia Social Services Council
211 Willett Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3M 3C7

Mr. George Hudson
Department of Social Services
5182 Prince Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2T7

Ms. Pauline Johnson
Federation of Foster Parent Associations
of Nova Scotia
Cobequid Multi-Service Centre
70 Memory Lane
Lower Sackville, N.S.
B4C 2J3

Rev. Vincent Ihasz
Nova Scotia Social Services
Council
74 Chappel Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 3P8

Mr. Michael Johnston
Family & Children's Services of
Lunenburg County
99 High Street
Bridgewater, N. S.
B4V 2W8

Ms. Sharon Hope Irwin
Cape Breton Transition House
Association
76 Cottage Road
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 2C7

Mr. Arnold Jones
Department of Social Services
48 William Street
Hantsport, N. S.
BOP 1P0

Ms. Shirley Jackson
Valley Child Development
Association
P. O. Box 269
Port Williams, N. S.
BOP 1T0

Ms. Bernice Jones
1621 Walnut Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 3S3

Mr. Wilfred Jackson
Nova Scotia Home for Colored
Children
1018 Main Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 4X9

Ms. Doreen Joseph
Children's Aid Society of Cape Breton
Suite 7, Provincial Building
360 Prince Street
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 5L1

Ms. Barbara Johnson
Native Council
P. O. Box 88
Newport, Hants Co., N. S.
BON 2A0

Mr. William Joyce
110 Snowy Owl Drive
Bedford, N. S.
B4A 3H1

Mr. Vincent Kachafanas
Cape Breton District School
Board
Family Life Institute
University College of Cape
Breton
P. O. Box 5300
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 6L2

Mr. Charles Keagan
Town of North Sydney
6 Disraeli Street
North Sydney, N. S.
B2A 2Z6

Miss Ann Keith
Services for Sexual Assault
Victims
6450 Young Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3L 2A3

Mr. Michael Kendrick
Department of Social Services
45 Alma Street
Yarmouth, N. S.
B5A 3G7

Ms. Agnes Kennedy
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 1450
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2L7

Ms. Joy Kennedy
Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia
5732 College Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 1X3

Ms. Kate Kennedy
Town of Pictou
P. O. Box 124
Pine Street
Pictou, N. S.
B0K 1H0

Mr. Neil Kennedy
Family & Children's Services of Hants Co.
R. R. #1, Windsor, N. S.
B0N 2T0

Ms. Teresa C. Kilbride
The Next Step Association
c/o Veith House
3115 Veith Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 3G9

Mr. George Kingham
Children's Training Centre - Sydney
997 Prince Street
Sydney, N. S. B1P 5P3

Ms. Brenda Knox-Townsend
Family & Children's Services of
Queens County
P. O. Box 1613
92 School Street
Liverpool, N. S.
B0T 1K0

Mr. David Kurts
Dartmouth Parent Support Group
61 Lynn Drive
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 3V8

Mr. Albert B. Laing
Municipality of Queens County
P. O. Box 178
Milton, Queens Co., N. S.
B0T 1P0

Mr. Gregg Lambert
Digby District Office
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 132
Bear River, Annapolis Co., N. S.
B0S 1B0

Ms. Lorena Landry
L'Association des femmes
 acadiennes en marche
Little Anse, Richmond Co., N. S.
BOE 3C0

Ms. Lorraine Logan
Chrysalis House
General Delivery
Kentville, N. S.
B4N 3V6

Ms. Ruby Lavers
Youth-in-Care Network
N. S. Family and Child Welfare
 Association
25 Vimy Avenue, Apartment #18
Halifax, N. S.
B3M 1G5

Ms. Marlene Lovett
Children's Aid Society of Cape Breton
198 Musgrave Lane
North Sydney, N. S.
B2A 2B8

Ms. Liselle Lavigne
Social Service Programs
Canada Assistance Plan
82 St. Louis
Gatineau, Quebec
J8T 2S3

Ms. Lucinda Low
Atlantic Conference on Learning
 Disabilities
P. O. Box 760
Wolfville, N. S.
B0P 1X0

Ms. Karen Lawley
Dartmouth District Office
Department of Social Services
5521 Macara Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 1W1

Mr. Robert Lutes
Department of Attorney General
P. O. Box 7
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2L6

Ms. Mary A. Ledwell
CAMR
3430 Prescott Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 4Y4

Mr. Harvey MacArthur
Department of Social Services
41 Archibald Street
Truro, N. S.
B2N 4R5

Ms. Madelyn LeMay
Children's Aid Society of
 Shelburne County
P. O. Box 271
Shelburne, N. S.
BOT 1W0

Ms. Mary MacAskill
Guysborough County Homemakers
P. O. Box 90
Guysborough, N. S.
BOH 1P0

Mr. Stan Locke
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 721
Digby, N. S.
BOV 1A0

Mr. Jim MacCormack
City of Sydney
391 Cottage Road
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 2G5

Ms. Beverley MacDonald
Association of Black Social
Workers
5 Rodney Terrace
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 2G9

Mr. Barrie MacFarlane
Children's Aid Society of Halifax
5244 South Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 1A4

Ms. Margaret MacDonald
Department of Social Services
1472 Tower Road, Apt. #510
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 4K8

Ms. Irene MacIsaac
Status of Women
28 Harold Street
Port Hawkesbury, N. S.
BOE 2V0

Sister Margaret MacDonald
Mount St. Bernard College
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2N5

Mr. James A. (Kie) MacIsaac
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2T7

Judge J. Vernon MacDonald
Family Court of Nova Scotia
c/o Family Court
Prince Street
Sydney, N. S.

Mr. Jerome MacKenzie
Children's Aid Society of
Cape Breton
20 Ryan Street
River Ryan
New Waterford, N. S.
B1H 3M3

Mr. Cameron MacDougall
Family Services of Eastern
Nova Scotia
17 Greening Drive
Antigonish, N. S.
B2H 1R1

Mrs. Joan M. MacKinnon
Department of Social Services
46 Birkdale Crescent
Halifax, N. S.
B3M 1H5

Ms. M. Gail MacDougall
Metro Area Special Committee
on Child Sexual Abuse
5244 South Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 1A4

Mr. John T. (Jock) MacKinnon
Department of Social Services
38 Deerbrooke Drive
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2V 1W3

Ms. Clare McEachern
Antigonish Diocesan Charities
69 King's Road
Sydney, Nova Scotia
B1S 1A2

Mr. Joseph A. MacKinnon
Department of Social Services
14 Tummell Drive
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2X 2A8

Mr. Daniel MacLean
Nova Scotia Department of Vocational and Technical
Training
P. O. Box 2086, Station "M"
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 3B7

Mr. Gordon MacMaster
Children's Aid Society of Inverness-
Richmond
25 Oak Crescent
Port Hawkesbury, N. S.
BOE 2V0

Ms. C. Bernadette MacLellan
Progress Centre for Early Intervention
5867 Spring Garden Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 1Y2

Mr. Archie MacNeil
Town of Truro
34 Adelaide Street
Truro, N. S.
B2W 2Z2

Ms. Cella MacLellan
Town of Antigonish
274 Main Street
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2C4

Mr. John MacNeil
County of Halifax Social Services
64 Kenwood Drive
34 Lawson Avenue
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2W 2Z2

Mr. George MacLeod
Nova Scotia Social Services
Council
R. R. #2, Scotsburn
Pictou Co., N. S.
BOK 1R0

Ms. Sandra MacNeil
Nova Scotia Federation of Labour
64 Kenwood Drive
Sydney River, N. S.
B1S 1T6

Mr. John MacLeod
Children's Aid Society of
Pictou County
R.R. #1, Black Point
Trenton, N. S.
BOK 1X0

Mr. Tom MacNeil
Association of Mental Health Staffs
of Nova Scotia
P. O. Box 1417
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2L7

Mr. William MacLeod
Nova Scotia Residential Centre
P. O. Box 826
Truro, N. S.
B2N 5G6

Ms. Marie MacPhee
Department of Social Services
Suite 205, Dartmouth Professional Centre
277 Pleasant Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 4B7

Ms. Zena MacLeod
(wife of George MacLeod)
Nova Scotia Social Services
Council
R.R. #2, Scotsburn
Pictou Co., N. S.
BOK 1R0

Mr. Ian MacPherson
Children's Aid Society of Cape Breton
Suite 7, Provincial Building
360 Prince Street
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 5L1

Ms. Marg MacPherson
Second Story Women's Centre
9 Dominion Street
Bridgewater, N S.
BOJ 2C0

Ms. Martha MacPherson
Department of Social Services
R. R. #2, Brierly Brook
Antigonish, N.S .
B2G 2R6

Mr. William McCarron
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2T7

Mr. Robert McConnell
Family and Children's Services
of Queens County
43 Carlton Street
Liverpool, N. S.

Mr. Kevin McDonald
Canada Assistance Plan
20 Bow Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 4E3

Ms. Marian McDonald
Cumberland County Transition
Home Association
P. O. Box 56
Amherst, N. S.
B4H 3Y6

Ms. Beatrice McGrath
Cape Breton Transition House
P. O. Box 487
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 6H4

Mr. Donald McIntosh
Family and Children's Services
of Annapolis County
36 Granville W.
Bridgetown, N. S.
BOS 1C0

Mr. James McLaren
Town of Annapolis Royal
30 St. James Street
P. O. Box 56
Annapolis Royal, N. S.
BOS 1A0

Mr. Edward McNeill
Nova Scotia Police Commission
P. O. Box 59
Mayflower Avenue
R. R. #1, Lr. Sackville, N. S.
B4C 2S6

Mr. Norman McNeill
Canadian Progress Club, Halifax
19 Kinston Crescent
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 2L9

Ms. Barbara McPherson
Children's Aid Society of Halifax
5244 South Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 1A4

Ms. Judy Manchester
Site 26, Box 2, R. R. #1
Windsor Junction, N. S.
BON 2V0

Mr. Murray Manzer
Family and Children's Services of
Lunenburg County
99 Prince Street
Bridgewater, N. S.
B4V 1C9

Mr. Felix Marchand
Richmond District School Board
Louisdale, Richmond Co., N. S.
BOE 1V0

Ms. Donna Marshall
North End Mothers Group
2A Blk, Mulgrave Park
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 3H3

Mr. Robert Matthews
Family and Children's Services
of Annapolis County
Annapolis Royal, N. S.
BOS 1A0

Ms. Jennifer Melanson-Wells
Jubien House
78 Gaston Road
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 3W6

Mr. Michael Melnyk
Children's Aid Society of
Inverness-Richmond
P. O. Box 167, Port Hastings
Inverness Co., N. S.
BOE 2T0

Ms. Patricia Mendis
Guysborough County District
School Board
Goldboro, N. S.
BOH 1L0

Ms. Lillian Migel
Homemakers Bureay
5555 Young Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 1Z7

Ms. Ferne Miles
Hawthorne House
131 Prince Albert Road
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 1M5

Mr. L. A. (Sy) Mills
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 1450
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2L7

Judge David Milner
Family Court of Nova Scotia
24 Crescent Avenue
P. O. Box 399
Amherst, N. S.
B4H 3Z5

Mr. Bruce Milson
Town of Port Hawkesbury
P. O. Box 359
Port Hawkesbury, N. S.
BOE 2V0

Ms. Kathy Moggridge
Secretary of State
5281 Duke Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3M 3J1

Mr. Orville Mombourquette
Tri-Community Interagency Council -
Halifax County East
Sheet Harbour
Halifax Co., N. S.
BOJ 3B0

Ms. Janet Moore
Family and Children's Services of
Lunenburg County
99 High Street
Bridgewater, N. S.
B4V 2W8

Ms. Jan Morrow
Yarmouth Municipal Council
R. R. #1, Ohio
Yarmouth Co., N. S.
BOW 3E0

Mr. Ted Muggah
Nova Scotia Social Services Council
R. R. #2, Centre
Kings Co., N. S.
BOP 1J0

Mr. Heikki Muinonen
Shelburne Youth Centre
P. O. Box 400
Shelburne, N. S.
BOT 1W0

Mr. Peter Mullally
Family Life Commission - Arch-
diocese of Halifax
3201 Connolly Street
Halifax, N. S.

Mr. John Murphy
Valley Health Services
38 Acadia Street
Wolfville, N. S.
BOP 1X0

Ms. Nasha Murphy
Naomi Society for Women in
Crisis
R. R. #1
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2K8

Mr. Patrick Murphy
Municipality of Argyle
Wedgeport
Yarmouth Co., N. S.
BOW 3P0

Mr. Brian Murray
R. C. M. P.
4 Fairview Street
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 1T2

Ms. Lori-Ann Muzzerall
The Next Step Program
26 Cannon Cres.
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 2H9

Rev. A. D. (Bill) Newell
Family and Children's Services
of Yarmouth County
15 Chestnut Street
Yarmouth, N. S.
B5A 2N5

Ms. Dianne Nickerson
Child Development Services Guild and/or
Victims of Family Violence Associa-
tion
51 Bayside Drive
R. R. #1, Truro
Colchester Co., N. S.
B2N 5A9

Dr. Jane Norman
Child Development Services Training
Centre
Froebel Training Centre
R. R. #1, Princeport
Truro, N. S.
B2W 5A9

Mr. Brian Norton
Department of Attorney General
1000 Belmont on the Arm
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 1J7

Ms. Claire Nyiti
Nova Scotia Commission on Drug Dependency
104 Mt. Florence Street
Sydney, N. S.
B1R 1T8

Mr. Daniel O'Brien
Maritime School of Social Work
1659 Beech Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 4B5

Ms. Judith O'Donnell
Larche Antigonish
69 St. Ninian Street
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 1Y7

Ms. Karen O'Hara
Tearmann Society for Battered
Womdn
R. R. #3, Merigomish
Pictou Co., N. S.
BOK 1G0

Miss Gwen Pickering
183 Crichton Avenue
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 3R7

Mr. Sean O'Neill
Department of Social Services
Boylston, Guysborough Co., N.S.
BOH 1G0

Mr. Darryl Pink
P. O. Box 247
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2N9

Mr. Bernard O'Neill
St. John Vianny Church
4 Beaverbank Road
Lower Sackville, N. S.
B4E 1G3

Ms. Susan Pirie-Geislinger
Cobequid Mental Health Centre
61 Riverview Crescent
Bedford, N. S.
B4A 2X5

Ms. Joan Parks
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2T7

Ms. Coreen Popowich
Tearmann Society for Battered Women
202 Brookside
New Glasgow, N. S.
B2H 3E5

Mr. Andrew Pavey
Veith House
3115 Veith Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 3G9

Mr. Cyril Porter
Municipality of Cumberland County
P. O. Box 399
Amherst, N. S.
B4H 3Z5

Mrs. Marilyn Peers
Children's Aid Society
of Halifax
5244 South Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 1A4

Ms. Carolyn Price-Weiland
Family and Children's Services of
Kings County
P. O. Box 89
R. R. #2
Wolfville, N. S.
BOP 1X0

Mr. Wayne Pick
Family and Children's Services
of Hants County
R. R. #3, Newport
Hants Co., N. S.
BON 2A0

Ms. Norma Jean Profit
Halifax Transition House Association
6045 Williams Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 1G1

Ms. Anne Pugh
Department of Social Services
27 Piers Avenue
Halifax, N. S.
B3N 1Z4

Rev. Raymond Purchase
Children's Aid Society of
Cape Breton
142 MacLean Street
Glace Bay, N. S.
B1A 2L3

Ms. Brenda Putnam
Child Development Services
R. R. #1, Debert
Colchester Co., N. S.
BOM 1G0

Mr. Mark Rainnie
Nova Scotia Social Services
Council
30 Pine Hill Road
Dartmouth, N. S.
B3A 2G1

Mr. Douglas Raymond
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 315
Yarmouth, N. S.
B5A 4B3

Ms. Leslie Read
P. O. Box 399
Amherst, Nova Scotia
B4H 3Z5

Mr. Cyril Reddy
Department of Social Services
417 Beech Street
New Glasgow, N. S.
B2H 1A5

Ms. Valerie Rhynold
Municipality of the District
of Guysborough
Melford, R. R. #1, Mulgrave
Guysborough Co., N. S.
BOE 2G0

Ms. Roberta Ridgley
Family and Children's Services
of Hants County
P. O. Box 99
Windsor, N. S.
BON 2T0

Ms. Patricia Ripley
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2T7

Miss Rosemary Rippon
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2T7

Mr. Harold Roberts
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 90
Guysborough, N. S.
BOH 1N0

Mr. Michael Roma
Municipality of Colchester County
P. O. Box 697
Truro, N. S.
B2N 5E7

Mr. Duncan Rosnok
Department of Social Services
103 Hardisty Crt.
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2V 1K8

Mr. Dale Ross
Atlantic Provinces Resource
Centre for Hearing Handi-
capped
P. O. Box 308
Amherst, N. S.
B4H 3Z6

Mr. Frank Sampson
Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia
69 King's Road
Sydney, N. S.
B1S 1A2

Ms. Joyce Ross
East Preston Day Care
S. S. 2, Site 9
Box 9, D.E.P.S.
East Preston, Halifax Co., N.S.
B2W 3Y5

Ms. Denise Samson
Association des Acadienne de Nouvelle
Ecosse
Box 2890
R. R. #1
Yarmouth, N. S.
B5A 4A5

Ms. Donna Rushton
Queens Early Childhood Develop-
ment Association
P. O. Box 1711
Liverpool, N. S.
BOT 1K0

Ms. Gail Sarauskys
Family and Children's Services
of Lunenburg County
P. O. Box 170
Bridgewater, N. S.
B4V 2W8

Mr. Donald Russell
Department of Social Services
22 Regent Street
Amherst, N. S.
B4H 3S7

Mr. Richard Sevigny
Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia
69 King's Road
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 3T5

Ms. Pat Russell
Family and Children's Services
of Cumberland County
22 Regent Street
Amherst, N. S.
B4H 3S7

Mr. Alex Shaw
Department of Social Services
6187 Inglis Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 1L6

Ms. Barbara Ryan
Wee Care Developmental Centre
3106 Barrington Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 2X6

Mrs. Coleen Shepherd
Kings County Committee on Child
Sexual Abuse
531 Main Street
Kentville, N. S.
B4N 1L4

Mr. Arthur Saffron
Family and Children's Services
of Cumberland County
15 Main Street
Springhill, N. S.
B0M 1X0

Ms. Ruth Sherman
Department of Social Services
58 Willow Street
P. O. Box 950
Truro, N. S.
B2N 5N8

Mr. Harold Sinclair
Municipality of St. Mary's
R. R. #2
Goshen, N. S.
BOH 1M0

Ms. Corinne Steele
Inter-Church Group Home
5244 South Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 1A4

Ms. Linda Smith
Izaak Walton Killam Hospital
for Children
P. O. Box 3070
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 3G9

Mr. David Stevenson
24 Broad Street
Truro, N. S.
B2N 3G2

Mr. Maurice Smith
Naomi Society for Women
in Crisis
P. O. Box 1503
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2L8

Ms. Sarah Stouffer
Association of North Shore Directors
of Registered Day Care Centres
81 Church Street
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2C9

Ms. Olivia Smith
Department of Social Services
Suite 205, Dartmouth Profes-
sional Centre
277 Pleasant Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 4B7

Mrs. Jean Strum
Family and Children's Services
of Queens County
29 Summer Street
Liverpool, N. S.
BOT 1K0

Ms. Virginia Smith
Yarmouth District School Board
24 Seminary Street
Yarmouth, N. S.
BOW 1W0

Mr. Norman Stubbington
185 Cusack Drive
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 3W6

Ms. Kathleen Spicer
Department of Housing
P. O. Box 815
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 3Z3

Ms. Deborah Sullivan
Antigonish County Homemakers
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2L3

Ms. Beth Stanfield
Children's Aid Society and
Family Services of
Colchester County
40 Patillo Avenue
Truro, N. S.
B2N 1K6

Mr. Art Surette
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 1068
Digby, N. S.
BOV 1A0

Ms. Louise Taylor
YMCA Walnut Street Group Home
1841 Walnut Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 3X8

Mr. Peter Tufts
Department of Social Services
6255 Jubilee Road
Halifax, N. S.
B3H 2G4

Ms. Madeline M. Taylor
61 Alice Street
Truro, N. S.
B2M 2M8

Mr. Bill Twaddle
Department of Health
P. O. Box 488
1690 Hollis Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2R8

Ms. Nancy Taylor
Valley Child Development
Association
P. O. Box 297
Wolfville, N. S.
B0P 1X0

Mr. John A. Walker
Nova Scotia Youth Training Centre
P. O. Box 460
Truro, N. S.
B2N 5C7

Ms. Elaine Thimot
R. R. #1, Saulnierville
Digby Co., N. S.
B0W 2Z0

Ms. Elaine Watson
South Shore Transition House
Association
R. R. #2
Mill Village, N. S.
B0J 2H0

Mr. Ross Thorpe
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2T7

Mr. George Wawin
Family and Children's Services
of Lunenburg County
99 High Street
Bridgewater, N. S.
B4V 2W8

Mr. Trevor Townsend
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 696
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2T7

Ms. Rose Webber
Canadian Association for Community
Living - Pictou Branch
R. R. #1
Trenton, N. S.
B0K 1X0

Ms. Chris Tragakis
Antigonish Infant Child Stimu-
lation Program
R. R. #1
Antigonish, N. S.
B2G 2K8

Ms. Terry Wetherell
Family and Children's Services
of Lunenburg County
P. O. Box 170
Bridgewater, N. S.
B4V 2W8

Rev. Thomas Whent
Sydney Area Ministerial
Association
46 Lorway Avenue
Sydney, N. S.
B1P 4Z2

Mr. Bernie White
Town of New Waterford
3371 Plummer Avenue
New Waterford, N. S.
B1H 1Y8

Ms. Mary White
Chrysalis House
P. O. Box 458
R. R. #2
Wolfville, N. S.
BOP 1X0

Ms. Jacqui Wilkinson
CAMR Dartmouth Development
Centre
110 King Street
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 2S3

Judge R. James Williams
Family Court Judge
45 Alderney Drive
Dartmouth, N. S.
B2Y 4B9

Mr. Trevor Williams
Family Service Canada
55 Parkdale Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
K1Y 4G1

Ms. Diane Wilson
Department of Social Services
Cobequid Multi-Service Centre
70 Memory Lane
Lower Sackville, N. S.
B4C 2J3

WDG2 87 001

Mr. Greg Wiseman
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 399
Digby, N. S.
BOV 1A0

Ms. Sue Wolstenholme
St. Joseph's Children's Centre
2326 Brunswick Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3K 2Z3

Ms. Anne Woods
Department of Social Services
2831 Connaught Avenue
Halifax, N. S.
B3L 2Z9

Mrs. Judith Zinck
Children's Aid Society of Pictou County
R. R. #1, Hopewell
Pictou County, N. S.
B0K 1C0

Mr. Sherman Zwicker
Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities
Suite 134, Roy Building
1657 Barrington Street
Halifax, N. S.
B3J 2A1

APPENDIX "E"
CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

**NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY
SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY**

JUNE 21 - JUNE 23, 1987

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Chairman - William Greateorex**
Administrator, Family and Children's Services Division
- **George Borden**
Executive Assistant to the Minister
 - **Michael Craig**
Senior Consultant
 - **Martha Crowe**
Administrative Office
 - **Bessie Harris**
Director of Policy, Planning and Research
 - **Arnold Jones**
Director of Financial Services
 - **Cyril Reddy**
Regional Administrator
North Shore Regional Office
 - **Rosemary Rippon**
Consultant, Family and Children's Services

APPENDIX "F"
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Minister and the Conference Planning Committee gratefully acknowledge the assistance of those who contributed to the success of the Conference on the Family and particularly:

Premier John Buchanan

Carmen Moir - Deputy Minister

Father Gregory MacKinnon - President of Saint Francis
Xavier University

Alma MacLean - Saint Francis Xavier Resident Services
Office and her Staff

Most Reverend Bishop Colin Campbell

Mayor Colin Chisholm

Warden High Fraser

David Fraser - Food Services Manager

Yvette Muise - Designer of the Conference Backdrop

Ian Lancaster - Manager of Audio Visual and his Staff

Iain Boyd - Manager of the Bloomfield Centre

Neil Allan Kell and Mike Campbell - Pipers

Bob Gourley - Photographer

Margaret MacDonald - Pianist

Jerry Parnell - Telephone Pioneers of America for the
Looping for the Hearing Impaired

Tom Conrad - Manager, Information Services (Department of
Social Services) and his Staff

Anne Woods - Information Officer (Department of Social Services)

Members of the Media

Valerie White - Coordinator Senior Citizens Secretariat

Cy Mills - District Supervisor (Department of Social Services -
Antigonish)

Gail Gilhen and Debra Gannon - Registrants

Gladys Sanford - Secretarial Duties